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SPECIMENS  
OF  
PROSE DESCRIPTION

COMPILED AND EDITED BY  
CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN, PH. D.  
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in Rhetoric and English Composition in  
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## PREFACE.

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THESE Specimens of Prose Description, though intended primarily for college classes, will be found available in the higher classes of schools. For not only is description, in its simpler forms, the kind of writing most proper to elementary work in composition, but even the theory of description, and its application in more finished art, may be very stimulating without being at all confusing. In fact, it is difficult to conduct a course in description adequately without leading up to the few fundamental principles enunciated here. And where the elaboration of these principles may seem beyond the grasp of the younger student, it is hoped that they will still be convenient for the teacher.

To avoid the ugliness of a catalogue of fragments, the shorter extracts have been grouped within the introduction. Of course these are quite as important as the longer pieces, and are equally recognized in the index. Moreover, they serve, not only to give point to the enunciation of principle, but also to obviate the necessity of scattered comment on the longer pieces. Instead of such detailed annotation, it seemed better to present in one place, as compactly as possible, the whole theory of description; to fortify this theory by

abundant examples; and to add at the head of each longer selection only such notes as might serve to indicate the purpose and to suggest the most profitable lines of study. Thus the aim has been, at once to furnish doctrine and directions for its application, and to leave the main body of selections free for such use as may seem best for each class. The only exception to this rule is in Selection I., where the notes are intended to show how the application may be made in detail.

In the selection of the longer extracts the aim has been to present such examples of all worthy methods as seemed most apt for instruction. Whether a given piece were characteristic of its author, whether it were famous,—these considerations were but secondary. In fact most of the selections are fairly characteristic. As for fame, the descriptions that every one has heard of are the least in need of reprinting. Moreover, they are not the most likely to bear examination.

Indeed, the editor deprecates all charges of omission. Scott and Thackeray, Dickens and George Eliot, are so near to every one's elbow that the student should be encouraged to bring into class and discuss those passages which seem to him most impressive. The omission of every teacher's favorite description is of the less moment because that description every teacher will surely quote. If the descriptions found here are good, each in its kind; if the kinds are many; finally, if the method in each case is pointed without being obtrusive, this little book will serve its purpose.

The editor wishes to express his appreciation of the

courtesy through which he is permitted to reprint many of his best extracts. In each case due acknowledgment will be found to book, author, and publisher.

To Professor G. R. Carpenter, Professor Brander Matthews, Professor Thomas R. Price, and Mr. W. T. Brewster of Columbia College, the editor presents his sincere thanks, both for valuable advice and for the favor of corrections in proof.

Perhaps the greatest debt is to the dead. In looking over the first rough draft of his introduction, the editor found that a preponderating number of citations had been drawn involuntarily from one author. Though he was moved to restore equilibrium, the editor would not neglect to acknowledge his obligation to Robert Louis Stevenson.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE, May, 1895.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE series of specimens of which this volume is a part is founded upon the current rhetorical division of

Rhetoric distinguishes four kinds of writing into four kinds, description, narration, exposition, and persuasion.<sup>1</sup>

The convenience of this division has not shielded it from objection. And it must of course remain doubtful to which category many well-known writings properly belong. Argument hardly proceeds without exposition, exposition without description; and whether a given work shall be classed as narration or as description it is often impossible to decide. The object of the division, however, is not to classify writings, but to distinguish methods of writing. Thus, though only a pedant would insist on a definite label, the teacher of composition insists properly on the definiteness of the methods, now argumentative, now expository, now descriptive. Thus again, though none of the selections in the four volumes of this series may be purely argumentative, narrative, expository, descriptive, each will be found to exemplify some distinct phase or phases of a distinct method.

What is true of the series in general is especially

---

<sup>1</sup> Including argumentation,

true of this volume. No form of writing has less independence than description. Pieces of pure description are rare in English literature, rare especially

**Dependence of description.** in the literature of the last thirty years. Most description is naturally accessory to narration, and naturally, therefore, brief and fragmentary. On the other hand, the methods of descrip-

**Description defined by its aim.** tion are distinct and tolerably independent, because its aim is distinct. The aim.

aim of description is the suggestion of mental images;<sup>1</sup> and the means to this end are sufficiently distinct from the means of securing comprehension, say, or conviction, to urge separate discussion and separate exemplification. For instance, description seeks to present the individual, exposition the class; description the concrete, exposition the abstract. In description, action is purely incidental; in narration, it is vital.<sup>2</sup>

But in aiming to suggest images description is not only distinguished from the other "kinds of writing"; it is at once associated with the other arts. The vulgar phrase "word-painting" indicates that. Indeed,

**Description and painting.** this word-painting, this apparent tendency in description to poach on the manor of another art, has excited no little critical reprobation. Without beating over the ground so thoroughly explored by Lessing,<sup>3</sup> or attempting to

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<sup>1</sup> For more elaborate definition see *Genung*, p. 326; *Fletcher and Carpenter*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Genung*, p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> *Laokoon*, cf. especially capp. xvi, xvii. M. Ferdinand Bru-

readjust the provinces of the arts, it is worth while to emphasize one practical consideration.

What description lacks in vividness of appeal it properly aims to make good in range of appeal. Certainly description may be said to fall as far below painting as suggestion falls below representation. But it is idle to speak of them as rival methods. The representation of painting is limited to form and attitude, light and colour. The suggestions of description, feebler in these, may add sound, motion, and even odour. The opportunity here, as will appear

The range of later, is not so much to accumulate suggestions as to select what is most apt to a particular case. But how valuable this range of appeal is in itself appears in descriptions like the following :

The track that I had followed in the evening soon died out, and I continued to follow over a bald turf ascent a row of stone pillars, such as had conducted me across the *Goulet*. It was already warm. I tied my jacket on the pack, and walked in my knitted waistcoat. *Modestine* herself was in high spirits, and broke of her own accord, for the first time in my experience, into a jolting trot that sent the oats swashing in the pocket of my coat. The view, back upon the northern *Gévaudan*, extended with every step ; scarce a tree, scarce a house, appeared upon the fields of wild hill that ran north, east, and west, all blue and gold in the haze and sunlight of the morning. A multitude of little birds kept sweeping and twittering about my path ; they perched on the stone pillars, they pecked and strutted on the turf, and I

---

netière goes farther : "il n'y a pas de commune mesure entre les sensations de l'oreille et celles de l'œil."—*l'Impressionisme dans le Roman*, pp. 103-108 of *le Roman Naturaliste*.

saw them circle in volleys in the blue air, and show, from time to time, translucent flickering wings between the sun and me.

Almost from the first moment of my march, a faint large noise, like a distant surf, had filled my ears. Sometimes I was tempted to think it the voice of a neighboring waterfall, and sometimes a subjective result of the utter stillness of the hill. But as I continued to advance, the noise increased and became like the hissing of an enormous tea-urn, and at the same time breaths of cool air began to reach me from the direction of the summit. At length I understood. It was blowing stiffly from the south upon the other slope of the *Lozère*, and every step that I took I was drawing nearer to the wind.—*Stevenson : Travels with a Donkey.*

Colour, form, light, sound, odour, motion, evidently all may be used in description. To be constantly mindful of this range is almost to insure one's self against word-painting. Though sound and motion are more easily and properly suggested by language, yet all the others may play some part. Which is most useful must be decided afresh for each description. In general, all the play of light and shadow, all the evanescent features so valuable in individualising a scene, and even the movements of living things, are determined by the time of day and the kind of light. Madison Square in the spring has one aspect at high noon, when the lawns are brilliant in colour, the tulips flaring in the great flower-beds, the sparrows and nurses chattering everywhere, and the loungers filling every bench ; and an utterly different aspect an hour after sundown, when the birds and the nurses are gone, the tulips closed, and the electric lights beginning to cast sharp lines of inky shadow, and to turn the lawns a dull, unnatural hue.

In particular, it has been remarked that Shelley's

suggestiveness arises often from his abundant and **ex-**  
**Odour.**      **quisite use of the half-forgotten element**  
**of odour.** The mention of Greek incense  
 may be as suggestive of a Greek church as the resinous  
 scent of burning pine is of an Adirondack camp.<sup>1</sup>

The mention of colour is, perhaps, more faintly  
**Colour.**      **suggestive, and should be simple.** Re-  
 finement of hues may be confusing.<sup>2</sup>

Before us lies a sea of fern, gone a russet brown from decay, in which are isles of dark green gorse, and little trees with scarlet and orange and lemon-colored leaflets fluttering down, and running after each other on the bright grass, under the brisk west wind which makes the willows rustle, and turn up the whites of their leaves in pious resignation to the coming change.

Harrow-on-the-Hill, with its pointed spire, rises blue in the distance ; and distant ridges, like receding waves, rise into blueness, one after the other, out of the low-lying mist ; the last ridge bluely melting into space. In the midst of it all gleams the Welsh Harp Lake, like a piece of sky that has become unstuck and tumbled into the landscape with its shiny side up.—*Du Maurier : Peter Ibbetson.*

Sounds may be suggested more quickly and definitely. Wordsworth's "soft inland murmur," Cole-  
**Sound.**      **ridge's "the sails did sigh like sedge,"**<sup>3</sup>  
 Dickens's rooks in *David Copperfield*,

<sup>1</sup> See also *Holmes : Autocrat*, iv.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the description in *Ruskin's Præterita*, iii (Naples, January 9, 1841), vol. ii, p. 85, of the Orpington edition. For a study in contrasted colours, see *A Cameo and A Pastel*, by Brander Matthews, *The Story of a Story*, Harper & Brothers, 1893.

<sup>3</sup> It is well to point out the force of onomatopœia, and at the same time to warn against the abuse of it. Cf. the opening of Dickens's *Cricket on the Hearth*.

the "echoing footsteps" in the *Tale of Two Cities*, and the kettle in *The Cricket on the Hearth* are famous instances. Further citation is unnecessary to show that description, without transgressing its proper limits, may attain distinct or even vivid images by the range of its appeal.

Of course the range of any one man's appeal, the extent of his power in suggestion, is measured by the extent and the keenness of his own perceptions. Herein lies the real affinity of description to the other arts. For it is a truism that all artistic training is primarily and constantly the training of the eye or the

**The training of the senses.** ear. Truism though it be, however, it should never become stale in the teaching of description. The observation of most men is dim in perception and narrow in range. When the student has been roused from blurred impressions of a few things to sharper impressions of many things, his description will take care of itself. Better than that, his whole education has gained a great impulse. For this reason more than one wise teacher has made description a foundation for the teaching of rhetoric. Do you know how a cow lies down, or a horse, or a dog, or a cat? Do you know the habits of each in drinking? Do you know how a hansom cab is balanced, or how a railway car takes a curve? What is the difference in appearance between an ailanthus tree and a walnut, a spruce and a hemlock? How of the note of the meadow-lark, or the Romanesque revivals in contemporary architecture? Questions like these have been known to stir a whole class.

Realization of the range of suggestion the awaken-

ing of closer observation, these are prerequisites. Definite instruction begins with the first principle of all art, the principle of selection. The **The catalogue.** student's first tendency is to catalogue. He needs to learn, then, first, that the details of his mental image are too numerous and too complex to be catalogued ; secondly, that the catalogue, even if he could achieve it, would not be suggestive. Its use is for identification, not for suggestion. It has no artistic value. Indeed, progress in description is mainly the development of an ability to get effects with fewer and fewer details.

Be the details few or many, however, they must always be chosen—chosen first according to their **Choose salient** prominence. The salient details, those **details** that leap to meet the senses, are evidently suggestive : the clatter of a New York street, the white glare of Athens, the scent of buckwheat, the scarlet coat of a British soldier. But some details **and character-** that are not salient are still suggestive, **istic details.** because they are characteristic, as, for instance, the fact that the clocks on the church towers in southeastern Switzerland have only one hand, or that Coleridge would shift constantly from one side of his garden path to the other. Whatever serves to individualise, whatever is peculiar to the time or the person or the scene described, is always important for description, however slight its intrinsic value.

Select what is salient, what is characteristic. Further comment tends to become too minute, and in any case the choice is peculiarly the affair of the chooser. According as a writer merely suggests what

he sees, or projects into his suggestion his own personal feeling, his description is said to be objective or subjective. The latter kind is naturally the more common. It is, moreover, the habit of our century as distinguished from the habit, for instance, of the eighteenth century, and becomes one of the marks of Romanticism.<sup>1</sup> But in a certain sense all worthy description is subjective; that is, it cannot be worthy unless it represent the seeing of the writer. No two men see exactly alike. Literally and metaphorically every man's eyesight is really distinct from every other man's. Specimens of description, therefore, should not mislead any student into attempting Hawthorne description or Stevenson description. Imitation here,

*The study of models.* as in all rhetorical study, should be study of method. The student on his high stool at the Louvre is not trying to paint like Rembrandt or Murillo. He is learning the management of colour and light. And invaluable as is this study of models, his task remains to see for himself and to paint what he sees. No other way is thoroughly worth while.

With these conditions, the study of models may be assisted by such a classification as shall lead from the simplest handling of details, through more elaborate treatment, to the most artistic method. It will be understood, however, that any given description may combine several methods,—that no description, in

<sup>1</sup> See *W. L. Phelps* : *English Romantic Movement*, p. 4. *Ruskin* : *Præterita*, § vi (vol. i, p. 195, Orpington edition).

fact, is likely to employ one method exclusively. The selections, therefore, both in this introduction and in the pages following, are grouped according to the method that, in each case, is dominant. Now the simplest method is enumeration.

The warrant for the arrest of Defoe described him as follows :

He is a middle-aged, spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark-brown coloured hair, but wears a wig ; a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth.

This is not very suggestive. Indeed, the lesson of the description in a warrant is, first, how weak in suggestion the enumeration of details may be, and, secondly, how important is the slightest detail that is individual. Note in the following the same method more artistically applied :

Nine years old, on 3d January, 1858, thus now rising towards ten ; neither tall nor short for her age ; a little stiff in her way of standing. The eyes rather deep blue at that time, and fuller and softer afterwards. Lips perfectly lovely in profile ;—a little too wide and hard in the edge, seen in front ; the rest of the features what a fair, well-bred Irish girl's usually are ; the hair, perhaps, more graceful in short curl round the forehead, and softer than one sees often, in the close-bound tresses above the neck.—*Ruskin : Præterita*, iii.

How suggestive enumeration may be appears in the following descriptions :

Almost every body knows, in our part of the world at least, how pleasant and soft the fall of the land is round about Plover's Barrows farm. All above it is strong dark mountain, spread with

heath, and desolate, but near our house the valleys cove, and open warmth and shelter. Here are trees, and bright green grass, and orchards full of contentment, and a man may scarce espy the brook, although he hears it everywhere. And, indeed, a stout good piece of it comes through our farm-yard, and swells sometimes to a rush of waves, when the clouds are on the hill-tops. But all below, where the valley bends, and the Lynn stream goes along with it, pretty meadows slope their breast, and the sun spreads on the water. And nearly all of this is ours, till you come to Nicholas Snowe's land.—*Blackmore : Lorna Doone.*

It was a delicious drive quite of itself, and the great end in view added a piquancy to the excursion that not every one who posts toward San Gimignano can hope to enjoy. The weather was charming,—bright yet cool ; the country was ravishing, being in the first full green of spring ; and the country-folk, flocking to or from some great festa, filled the winding and undulating roads with a gay excess of life and color. The cypressed villas, the ruinous old abbeys in delightful gothic brickwork, the campanili of village churches rising from the olived slopes of hillsides, the twisted graces of vine-wreathed pergole, the wide-flapping straw hats of the women trudging by, the jauntily-carried jackets of the men, the gay romping of blossom-snatching children, the bustle of roadside osterie, the slow jolting of ox-carts along the common highway, the sturdy-arched, low-roofed farmhouses, the flowers, the sunshine, the lightly stirring breeze,—all the thousand things that combine into that inexhaustible feast of grace and beauty and social and historical interest which Tuscany knows so well how to spread, caused our two friends more than once to quite lose sight of the great undertaking that they had been commissioned to carry through ; and, for the half hour previous to the first appearance of San Gimignano's high-set coronet of towers, I doubt if the Madonna Incognita received from them the tribute of a single thought.—*Henry B. Fuller : The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani*, cap. iii.

But high up in the steeple ! There the foul blast roars and whistles ! High up in the steeple, where it is free to come and

go through many an airy arch and loophole, and to twist and twine itself about the giddy stair, and twirl the groaning weather-cock, and make the very tower shake and shiver! High up in the steeple where the belfry is, and iron rails are ragged with rust, and sheets of lead and copper, shrivelled by the changing weather, crackle and heave beneath the unaccustomed tread; and birds stuff shabby nests into corners of old oaken joists and beams; and dust grows old and grey; and speckled spiders, indolent and fat with long security, swing idly to and fro in the vibration of the bells, and never loose their hold upon their thread-spun castles in the air, or climb up sailor-like in quick alarm, or drop upon the ground and ply a score of nimble legs to save a life!—*Dickens : The Chimes.*

Besides, some of the smaller cities are charming. If they have an old church or two, a few stately mansions of former grandees, here and there an old dwelling with the second story projecting, (for the convenience of shooting the Indians knocking at the front-door with their tomahawks,)—if they have, scattered about, those mighty square houses built something more than half a century ago, and standing like architectural bowlders dropped by the former diluvium of wealth, whose refluent wave has left them as its monument,—if they have gardens with elbowed apple-trees that push their branches over the high board-fence and drop their fruit on the sidewalk,—if they have a little grass in the side-streets, enough to betoken quiet without proclaiming decay,—I think I could go to pieces, after my life's work were done, in one of those tranquil places, as sweetly as in any cradle that an old man may be rocked to sleep in.—*Holmes : Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

The last selection hints that enumeration needs usually some distinct suggestion of the whole, some

**Enumeration with suggestion of the whole.** single impression to give unity and coherence to the successive impressions of the separate details. This impression of the whole may be of the simplest, as at the beginning of Defoe's description of Winchester :

From hence, at the end of seven miles over the Downs, we come to the very ancient city of Winchester; not only the great church (which is so famous all over Europe, and has been so much talked of), but even the whole city has at a distance the face of venerable, and looks ancient afar off; and yet here are many modern buildings too, and some very handsome.—*London to Land's End.*

Again, the impression of the whole may be used to pervade the whole enumeration and give it tone, as often in Carlyle :

Mrs. Sterling, even in her later days, had still traces of the old beauty : then and always she was a woman of delicate, pious, affectionate character ; exemplary as a wife, a mother and a friend. A refined female nature ; something tremulous in it, timid, and with a certain rural freshness still unweakened by long converse with the world. The tall, slim figure, always of a kind of quaker neatness ; the innocent anxious face, anxious bright hazel eyes ; the timid, yet gracefully cordial ways, the natural intelligence, instinctive sense and worth, were very characteristic. Her voice, too, with its something of soft querulousness, easily adapting itself to a light thin-flowing style of mirth on occasion, was characteristic : she had retained her Ulster intonations, and was withal somewhat copious in speech. A fine, tremulously sensitive nature, strong chiefly on the side of the affections, and the graceful insights and activities that depend on these :—truly a beautiful, much-suffering, much-loving house-mother.—*Life of John Sterling.*

In my last I gave you the particulars of our little journey to Geneva : I have only to add that we stayed about a week in order to see Mr. Conway settled there : I do not wonder so many English choose it for their residence ; the city is very small, neat, prettily built, and extremely populous ; the Rhône runs through the middle of it, and it is surrounded with new fortifications, that give it a military compact air ; which, joined to the happy, lively countenances of the inhabitants, and an exact dis-

cipline always as strictly observed as in time of war, makes the little republic appear a match for a much greater power ; though perhaps Geneva, and all that belongs to it, are not of equal extent with Windsor and its two parks. To one that has passed through Savoy, as we did, nothing can be more striking than the contrast, as soon as he approaches the town. Near the gates of Geneva runs the torrent Arve, which separates it from the King of Sardinia's dominions ; on the other side of it lies a country naturally, indeed, fine and fertile ; but you meet with nothing in it but meagre, ragged, bare-footed peasants, with their children, in extreme misery and nastiness ; and even of these no great numbers. You no sooner have crossed the stream I have mentioned, but poverty is no more ; not a beggar, hardly a discontented face to be seen ; numerous and well-dressed people swarming on the ramparts ; drums beating, soldiers, well clothed and armed, exercising ; and folks, with business in their looks, hurrying to and fro ; all contribute to make any person, who is not blind, sensible what a difference there is between the two governments, that are the causes of one view and the other.—*Gray to Philip Gray, Lyons, October 25, N. S., 1739.*

This method, when used to emphasize the peculiar character of a person or a place, becomes what, in painting, is called *genre* study.<sup>1</sup>

In enumerative descriptions of places the impression of the whole is often strengthened by some indica-

Enumeration with grouping on plan. cation of plan, some grouping to avoid confusion. This, again, may be of the

simplest. In Ruskin's famous description of St. Mark's the details are given from below upward. Equally simple are the following :

The shores, now covered by the city of Oswego, were then a desolation of bare hills and fields, studded with the stumps of felled trees, and hedged about with a grim border of forests. Near

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Selection XI.

the strand, by the mouth of the Onondaga, were the houses of some of the traders : and on the higher ground behind them stood a huge block-house, with a projecting upper story. This building was surrounded by a rough wall of stone, with flankers at the angles, forming what was called the fort.—*Parkman : Montcalm and Wolfe.*

Only figure to yourself a vast semicircular basin, full of fine blue sea, and vessels of all sorts and sizes, some sailing out, some coming in, and others at anchor ; and all around it palaces, and churches peeping over one another's heads, gardens, and marble terraces full of orange and cypress trees, fountains, and trellis-works covered with vines, which altogether compose the grandest of theatres.—*Gray to Richard West, Genoa, November 21, 1739.*

His study-room in this house was perhaps mainly the drawing-room ; looking out safe, over the little dingy grass-plot in front, and the quiet little row of houses opposite, with the huge dust-whirl of Oxford Street and London far enough ahead of you as background,—as back-curtain, blotting out only *half* your blue hemisphere with dust and smoke. On the right, you had the continuous growl of the Uxbridge Road and its wheels, coming as lullaby not interruption. Leftward and rearward, after some thin belt of houses, lay mere country ; bright sweeping green expanses, crowned by pleasant Hampstead, pleasant Harrow, with their rustic steeples rising against the sky.—*Carlyle : Life of John Sterling.*

There were few cities of the Netherlands more picturesque in situation, more trimly built, and more opulent of aspect than the little city of Namur. Seated at the confluence of the Sambre with the Meuse, and throwing over each river a bridge of solid but graceful structure, it lay in the lap of a most fruitful valley. A broad, crescent-shaped plain, fringed by the rapid Meuse and enclosed by gently rolling hills cultivated to their crests, or by abrupt precipices of limestone crowned with verdure, was divided by numerous hedgerows, and dotted all over with cornfields, vineyards, and flower-gardens. Many eyes have gazed with

delight upon that well-known and most lovely valley, and many torrents of blood have mingled with those glancing waters since that long-buried and most sanguinary age which forms our theme ; and still placid as ever is the valley, brightly as ever flows the stream. Even now, as in that vanished but never-forgotten time, nestles the little city in the angle of the two rivers ; still directly over its head seems to hang in mid-air the massive and frowning fortress, like the gigantic helmet in fiction, as if ready to crush the pigmy town below.—*Motley : Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Part v, cap. iii.

Often, however, clearness demands a more distinct, or even a more formal, plan. The look of the whole cannot be secured without establishing some framework on which the details may be hung without confusion. Thus the basis of Victor Hugo's description of the field of Waterloo is a capital A. Thus Mr. Rudyard Kipling presents the manœuvres of a sham campaign :

The Army of the South had finally pierced the centre of the Army of the North, and was pouring through the gap hot-foot to capture a city of strategic importance. Its front extended fan-wise, the sticks being represented by regiments strung out along the line of route backwards to the divisional transport columns and all the lumber of an army on the move. On its right the broken left of the Army of the North was flying in mass. . . . The elated commandant of the pursuing force telegraphed that he held all in check and observation. Unluckily he did not observe that three miles to his right flank a flying column of Northern horse . . . . had been pushed around . . . . to cut across the entire rear of the Southern army, to break, as it were, all the ribs of the fan where they converged.—*Kipling : The Courting of Dinah Shadd*.

Though Constantine, from a very obvious prejudice, affects to mention the palace of Diocletian with contempt, yet one of their successors, who could only see it in a neglected and mutilated

state, celebrates its magnificence in terms of the highest admiration. It covered an extent of ground consisting of between nine and ten English acres. The form was quadrangular, flanked with sixteen towers. Two of the sides were near six hundred, and the other two near seven hundred, feet in length. The whole was constructed of a beautiful free-stone, extracted from the neighbouring quarries of Trau, or Tragutium, and very little inferior to marble itself. Four streets, intersecting each other at right angles, divided the several parts of this great edifice, and the approach to the principal apartment was from a very stately entrance, which is still denominated the Golden Gate.—*Gibbon : Decline and Fall*, cap. xiii.

The Bay of Monterey has been compared by no less a person than General Sherman to a bent fishing-hook ; and the comparison, if less important than the march through Georgia, still shows the eye of a soldier for topography. Santa Cruz sits exposed at the shank ; the mouth of the Salinas river is at the middle of the bend ; and Monterey itself is cosily ensconced beside the barb. Thus the ancient capital of California faces across the bay, while the Pacific Ocean, though hidden by low hills and forest, bombards her left flank and rear with never-dying surf. In front of the town, the long line of sea-beach trends north and north-west, and then westward to enclose the bay.—*Stevenson : Across the Plains*.

This method is used in histories to call up a sort of mental sketch-map :

French America had two heads,—one among the snows of Canada, and one among the cane-brakes of Louisiana ; one communicating with the world through the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the other through the Gulf of Mexico. These vital points were feebly connected by a chain of military posts,—slender, and often interrupted,—circling through the wilderness nearly three thousand miles. Midway between Canada and Louisiana lay the valley of the Ohio. If the English should seize it, they would sever the chain of posts, and cut French America asunder. If the French

held it, and entrenched themselves well along its eastern limits, they would shut their rivals between the Alleghanies and the sea, control all the tribes of the West, and turn them, in case of war, against the English borders,—a frightful and insupportable scourge.<sup>1</sup>—*Parkman: Montcalm and Wolfe.*

More important even than a plan, however, in securing the impression of the whole, is some distinct indication of the point of view.<sup>2</sup> The point of view,

The point of view. indeed, often determines the plan, as it always determines the aspect of the whole. Disregard of this cardinal maxim may confuse an entire description or render it absurd. On the other hand, insistence on this point strikes at the root of vulgar conventions. The description of a prospect from some point near a river bank must not speak of the stream as a silver thread, nor of the coarse prairie grass all about as velvety. It would be an equally gross error were the same scene described from some high bluff, to speak of the prairie grass, with its gaudy flowers and its countless insects, as a miniature tropical forest, a comparison apt enough to a man lying on his back in the tangle of it.<sup>3</sup> The following presents the same scene from two points of view, both carefully indicated :

Upon these rocks there was nothing that could long detain attention, and we soon turned our eyes to the Buller or Bouilloir of Buchan, which no man can see with indifference, who has

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Motley : *Dutch Republic*, Histor. Introd., p. i; and the description of Harlem in Part iii, cap. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Genung*, 329.

<sup>3</sup> For the application of this principle to decorative art, see Ruskin : *Stones of Venice*, cap. xxi, § xvii.

either sense of danger, or delight in rarity. It is a rock perpendicularly tubulated, united on one side with a high shore, and on the other rising steep to a great height above the main sea. The top is open, from which may be seen a dark gulf of water which flows into the cavity, through a breach made in the lower part of the enclosing rock. It has the appearance of a vast well bordered with a wall. The edge of the Buller is not wide, and to those that walk round, appears very narrow. He that ventures to look downward, sees that if his foot should slip, he must fall from his dreadful elevation upon stones on one side, or into the water on the other. We, however, went round, and were glad when the circuit was completed.

When we came down to the sea, we saw some boats, and rowers, and resolved to explore the Buller at the bottom. We entered the arch, which the water had made, and found ourselves in a place, which, though we could not think ourselves in danger, we could scarcely survey without some recoil of the mind. The basin in which we floated was nearly circular, perhaps thirty yards in diameter. We were enclosed by a natural wall, rising steep on every side to a height which produced the idea of insurmountable confinement. The interception of all lateral light caused a dismal gloom. Round us was a perpendicular rock, above us the distant sky, and below an unknown profundity of water. If I had any malice against a walking spirit, instead of laying him in the Red Sea, I would condemn him to reside in the Buller of Buchan.—*Johnson : Journey to the Western Islands.*

Note how carefully the arrangement of details is determined in each case by the point of view in the two following descriptions of the same valley :<sup>1</sup>

The chine of highland, whereon we stood, curved to the right and left of us, keeping about the same elevation, and crowned with trees and brushwood. At about half a mile in front of us, but looking as if we could throw a stone to strike any man upon

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. notes on these passages in *Genung : Handbook of Rhetorical Analysis*, p. 156.

it, another crest, just like our own, bowed around to meet it ; but failed, by reason of two narrow clefts, of which we could only see the brink. One of these clefts was the Doone-gate, with a portcullis of rock above it ; and the other was the chasm, by which I had once made entrance. Betwixt them, where the hills fell back, as in a perfect oval, traversed by the winding water, lay a bright green valley, rimmed with sheer black rock, and seeming to have sunken bodily from the bleak rough heights above. It looked as if no frost could enter, neither winds go ruffling ; only spring, and hope, and comfort, breathe to one another. Even now the rays of sunshine dwelt, and fell back on themselves, whenever the clouds lifted ; and the pale blue glimpse of the growing day seemed to find young encouragement.

A very rough and headstrong road was all that she remembered, for she could not think as she wished to do, with the cold iron pushed against her. At the end of this road they delivered her eyes, and she could scarce believe them.

For she stood at the head of a deep green valley, carved from out the mountains in a perfect oval, with a fence of sheer rock standing round it, eighty feet or a hundred high ; from whose brink black wooded hills swept up to the sky-line. By her side a little river glided out from underground with a soft dark babble, un-aware of daylight ; then, growing brighter, lapsed away, and fell into the valley. There, as it ran down the meadow, alders stood on either marge, and grass was blading out upon it, and yellow tufts of rushes gathered, looking at the hurry. But further down, on either bank, were covered houses, built of stone, square and roughly cornered, set as if the brook were meant to be the street between them. Only one room high they were, and not placed opposite each other, but in and out, as skittles are ; only that the first of all, which proved to be the captain's, was a sort of double house, or rather, two houses joined together by a plank-bridge over the river.—*Blackmore : Lorna Doone.*

Compare also the following :

It stands in a little quiet valley, which gradually rises behind the ruins into a half-circle crowned with thick wood. Before it,

on a descent, is a thicket of oaks, that serves to veil it from the broad day and from profane eyes, only leaving a peep on both sides, where the sea appears glittering through the shade, and vessels, with their white sails, that glide across and are lost again. Concealed behind the thicket stands a little castle (also in ruins), immediately on the shore, that commands a view over an expanse of sea clear and smooth as glass (when I saw it), with Southampton and several villages three miles off to the right, Calshot Castle at seven miles' distance, and the high lands of the Isle of Wight to the left, and in front the deep shades of the New Forest distinctly seen, because the water is no more than three miles over.—*Gray to the Rev. James Brown, October, 1764.*

We must still have spent some time in town-seeing, for it was drawing toward sunset when we got up to some sort of garden promenade—west of the town, I believe, and high above the Rhine, so as to command the open country across it to the south and west. At which open country of low undulation, far into blue,—gazing as at one of our own distances from Malvern of Worcestershire, or Dorking of Kent—suddenly—behold—beyond—

There was no thought in any of us for a moment of their being clouds. They were clear as crystal, sharp on the pure horizon sky, and already tinged with rose by the sinking sun. Infinitely beyond all that we had ever thought or dreamed,—the seen walls of lost Eden could not have been more beautiful to us; not more awful, round heaven, the walls of sacred Death.—*Ruskin: Praeterita, vi* (view of the Alps from Schaffhausen).

The traveller from the coast, who, after plodding for a score of miles over calcareous downs and corn lands, suddenly reaches the verge of one of these escarpments, is surprised and delighted to behold, extended like a map beneath him, a country differing absolutely from that which he has passed through. Behind him the hills are open, the sun blazes down upon fields so large as to give an unenclosed character to the landscape, the lanes are white, the hedges low and plashed, the atmosphere colourless. Here, in the valley, the world seems to be constructed upon a smaller and more

delicate scale ; the fields are mere paddocks, so reduced that from this height their hedge-rows appear a net-work of dark green threads overspreading the paler green of the grass. The atmosphere beneath is languorous, and is so tinged with azure that what artists call the middle distance partakes also of that hue, while the horizon beyond is of the deepest ultramarine. Arable lands are few and limited ; with but slight exceptions the prospect is a broad rich mass of grass and trees, mantling minor hills and dales within the greater. Such is the Vale of Blackmoor.—*Thomas Hardy : Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*

It will be seen from all these extracts that care for the point of view tends to clarify the impression of the *The principle whole by the observance of due proportion.* portion. If one keep the point of view, he will be the more likely to keep his perspective, more likely to make all his details converge upon one point or heighten one impression. This is exactly the bidding of that main principle of all good composition, the principle of proportion.<sup>1</sup> Dwell upon the details that heighten the one desired effect, subdue those that are merely accessory, suppress those that are incongruous : this is the principle applied to description. Ruskin's description of St. Mark's<sup>2</sup> is a study in contrast. The character of the Venetian cathedral is accentuated by an introductory description of a typical English cathedral. But since this introductory description is merely accessory, it is compressed within narrow limits. Again, the beauty and aspiration inherent in the design and the ornament of St. Mark's are contrasted with the sordid brutality of

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<sup>1</sup>See *Carpenter*, pp. 156, 179. *Genung*, 207.

<sup>2</sup>*Stones of Venice*, vol. ii, cap. iv, § 10. Cf. notes thereon in *Genung : Handbook*, p. 36.

the people that now live in its shadow. But this dark suggestion, since its use is merely to heighten the effect of brightness, is also compressed and subdued. Sound art, whether of suggestion or of representation, is careful not to elaborate the background unduly.

All these principles apply equally to a kind of description thus far unmentioned, the so-called narrative

Description by narrative. description.<sup>1</sup> This term, though it seems to introduce confusion, defines precisely enough a description like the following :

I consulted several things in my situation, which I found would be proper for me : first, health and fresh water, I just now mentioned ; secondly, shelter from the heat of the sun ; thirdly, security from ravenous creatures, whether man or beast ; fourthly, a view to the sea, that if God sent any ship in sight, I might not lose any advantage for my deliverance, of which I was not willing to banish all my expectation yet.

In search of a place proper for this, I found a little plain on the side of a rising hill, whose front towards this little plain was as steep as a house-side, so that nothing could come down upon me from the top. On the side of the rock there was a hollow place worn a little way in, like the entrance or door of a cave ; but there was not really any cave, or way into the rock at all.

On the flat of the green, just before this hollow place, I resolved to pitch my tent. This plain was not above a hundred yards broad, and about twice as long, and lay like a green before my door ; and, at the end of it, descended irregularly every way down into the low ground by the sea-side. It was on the N. N. W. side of the hill ; so that it was sheltered from the heat every day, till it came to a W. and by S. sun, or thereabouts, which, in those countries, is near the setting.

Before I set up my tent, I drew a half-circle before the hollow place, which took in about ten yards in its semi-diameter, from the rock, and twenty yards in its diameter, from its beginning and ending.

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<sup>1</sup> *Fletcher and Carpenter*, p. 58.

In this half-circle I pitched two rows of strong stakes, driving them into the ground till they stood very firm like piles, the biggest end being out of the ground above five feet and a half, and sharpened on the top. The two rows did not stand above six inches from one another.

Then I took the pieces of cable which I had cut in the ship, and laid them in rows, one upon another, within the circle, between these two rows of stakes, up to the top, placing other stakes in the inside, leaning against them, about two feet and a half high, like a spur to a post ; and this fence was so strong, that neither man nor beast could get into or over it. This cost me a great deal of time and labour, especially to cut the piles in the woods, bring them to the place, and drive them into the earth.

The entrance into this place I made to be not by a door, but by a short ladder to go over the top ; which ladder, when I was in, I lifted over after me ; and so I was completely fenced in and fortified, as I thought, from all the world, and consequently slept secure in the night, which otherwise I could not have done ; though, as it appeared afterwards, there was no need of all this caution from the enemies that I apprehended danger from.—*Defoe : Robinson Crusoe.*

This is as obviously descriptive as its method is obviously narrative. Defoe wishes, indeed, to tell what Crusoe did, but he wishes mainly to make a picture of the hut, and he does the latter by doing the former. It makes no essential difference whether such descriptions occur in stories or not, or indeed whether they be called descriptions or stories. Here, at any rate, is a method of suggestion by enumeration as common as it is effective. By this method, moreover, the difficulties urged by Lessing<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See p. x, and note the following from Lessing's sixteenth chapter :

" For one thing, I say that Homer has generally but a single

may be minimized. Note how Defoe resumes his description :

I have already *described* my habitation, which was a tent under the side of a rock, surrounded with a strong pale of posts and cables ; but I might now rather call it a wall, for I raised a kind of wall up against it of turfs, about two feet thick on the outside ; and after some time (I think it was a year and a half) I raised rafters from it, leaning to the rock, and thatched or covered it with boughs of trees, and such things as I could get, to keep out the rain, which I found at some times of the year very violent.

I have already observed how I brought all my goods into this pale, and into the cave which I had made behind me. But I must observe, too, that at first this was a confused heap of goods, which, as they lay in no order, so they took up all my place ; I had no room to turn myself : so I set myself to enlarge my cave, and work farther into the earth ; for it was a loose sandy rock, which yielded easily to the labour I bestowed on it ; and so, when I found I was pretty safe as to beasts of prey, I worked sideways, to the right hand, into the rock ; and then, turning to the right again, worked quite out, and made me a door to come out on the outside of my pale or fortification. This gave me not only egress and regress, as it was a back way to my tent and storehouse, but gave me room to store my goods.

And now I began to apply myself to make such necessary things as I found I most wanted, particularly a chair and a table ; for without these I was not able to enjoy the few comforts I had in the world ; I could not write or eat, or do several things, with so much pleasure without a table : *so I went to work.*

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characteristic ; a ship is for him now the black ship, now the hollow ship, now the swift ship, at most the well-rowed black ship. Farther than this he does not enter into any description of the ship. But of the sailing, the setting out, and hauling up of the ship he draws a detailed picture enough, of which, if the artist wished to transfer the whole of it to his canvas, he would be compelled to make five or six different paintings."—*Beasley and Zimmern's Translation.*

This is essentially the method of the newspaper "sketch," and of works like Defoe's *Storm and Journal of the Plague Year*.<sup>1</sup> Compare also the following instances :

Or again, if it rained, and Paris through the studio window loomed lead-colored, with its shiny slate roofs under skies that were ashen and sober, and the wild west wind made woeful music among the chimney-pots, and little gray waves ran up the river the wrong way, and the Morgue looked chill and dark and wet, and almost uninviting (even to three healthy-minded young Britons), they would resolve to dine and spend a happy evening at home.

Little Billee, taking with him three francs (or even four), would dive into back streets and buy a yard or so of crusty new bread, well burned on the flat side, a fillet of beef, a litre of wine, potatoes and onions, butter, a little cylindrical cheese called "bondon de Neufchâtel," tender curly lettuce, with chervil, parsley, spring onions, and other fine herbs, and a pod of garlic, which would be rubbed on a crust of bread to flavor things with.

Taffy would lay the cloth Englishwise, and also make the salad, for which, like everybody else I ever met, he had a special receipt of his own (putting in the oil first and the vinegar afterward); and indeed his salads were quite as good as everybody else's.

The Laird, bending over the stove, would cook the onions and beef into a savory Scotch mess so cunningly that you could not taste the beef for the onions—nor always the onions for the garlic !

And they would dine far better than at le Père Trin's, far better than at the English restaurant in the Rue de la Madeleine—better than anywhere else on earth !

And after dinner, what coffee, roasted and ground on the spot, what pipes and cigarettes of "caporal," by the light of the three

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<sup>1</sup> It is also the method of Stevenson's *Across the Plains*, and of the description of storm in the twenty-sixth chapter of *David Copperfield*.

shaded lamps, while the rain beat against the big north window, and the wind went howling round the quaint old mediæval tower at the corner of the Rue Vieille des Mauvais Ladres (the old street of the bad lepers) and the damp logs hissed and crackled in the stove!—*Du Maurier : Trilby.*

Of course I was up the very next morning before the October sunrise, and away through the wild and the woodland toward the Bagworthy water, at the foot of the long cascade. The rising of the sun was noble in the cold and warmth of it; peeping down the spread of light, he raised his shoulder heavily over the edge of gray mountain and wavering length of upland. Beneath his gaze the dew-fogs dipped, and crept to the hollow places; then stole away in line and column, holding skirts, and clinging subtly at the sheltering corners, where rock hung over grass-land; while the brave lines of the hills came forth, one beyond other gliding.

Then the woods arose in folds, like drapery of awakened mountains, stately with a depth of awe, and memory of the tempests. Autumn's mellow hand was on them, as they owned already, touched with gold, and red, and olive; and their joy toward the sun was less to a bridegroom than a father.

Yet before the floating impress of the woods could clear itself, suddenly the gladsome light leaped over hill and valley, casting amber, blue, and purple, and a tint of rich red rose, according to the scene they lit on, and the curtain flung around; yet all alike dispelling fear and the cloven hoof of darkness, all on the wings of hope advancing and proclaiming that “God is here!” Then life and joy sprang reassured from every crouching hollow; every flower, and bud, and bird had a fluttering sense of them; and all the flashing of God's gaze merged into soft beneficence.—*Blackmore : Lorna Doone.*

The evening came as they passed along a steep white road with many windings among the pines, and it was night when they reached the temple, the lights of which shone out upon them pausing before the sacred enclosure, while Marius became alive to a singular purity in the air. A rippling of water about the place

was the only thing audible, as they waited till two priestly figures, speaking Greek to one another, admitted them into a large white-walled and clearly lighted guest-chamber, in which, while he partook of a simple but wholesomely prepared supper, Marius still seemed to feel pleasantly the height they had attained to among the hills.—*Pater : Marius the Epicurean.*

Thus far we have spoken only of description by enumeration. There is a pronounced modern tendency in both painting and literature to obtain a unified effect, not by mere subordination of details, but by actual suppression of as many details as possible. Carried to the extreme, this method is called impressionism, and has obtained only a partial and doubtful recognition. But in description, at any rate, this reaction embodies a principle that appeals strongly to most readers. "No human being," says Stevenson, "ever spoke of scenery for above two minutes at a time, which makes one suspect we hear too much of it in literature."<sup>1</sup> "But methinks I am describing," writes Gray to West,<sup>2</sup> after reporting a great ecclesiastical function, "'tis an ill habit, but this, like everything else, will wear off."

It is certain, moreover, that the limits of effectiveness in enumerative description are stricter than writers of the older fashion, and those who follow them to-day, seem thoroughly to appreciate. On this point M. Jules Lemaître has said, perhaps, the last word :

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<sup>1</sup> *Memories and Portraits : Talk and Talkers.*

<sup>2</sup> Rome, April 16, N. S., 1740.

Description without enumeration.

Et puis, dans cette idylle neurasthénique d'*Une Page d'amour*,<sup>1</sup> il y a une chose que M. Samson<sup>2</sup> ne pouvait transporter dans sa pièce : il y a Paris ; il y a le panorama de la grande ville vue des hauteurs du Trocadéro, à toutes les heures du jour, par toutes les saisons et par tous les ciels. Hélène Grandchamp est courageuse, incertaine ou défaillante, selon la façon dont est éclairé le dôme des Invalides, suivant que la façade de l'École Militaire est gris sale ou gris-perle, suivant qu'à l'horizon le Panthéon est mauve ou paraît en pain d'épice, et suivant que la Seine est couleur d'émeraude, couleur de marne ou couleur d'étain. Ces descriptions, dont la moindre déborde sur dix pages d'imprimé, sont restées fameuses. On les admire beaucoup, sans toujours les avoir lues. Je crois que ce qu'on admire au fond, c'est l'étrange effort dont elles témoignent.

C'a été l'une des plus grossières erreurs littéraires de ce temps, de confondre l'énumération des parties avec la peinture, de croire que la juxtaposition interminable de détails, même pittoresques, peut finalement "former tableau," nous rendre sensibles les vastes spectacles de l'univers physique. En réalité, une description écrite ne se compose et ne s'ordonne dans notre esprit que si l'impression des premiers traits dont elle est formée se prolonge et retentit assez en nous pour que nous les puissions rejoindre aisément à ceux qui la complètent et la terminent. Bref, un morceau descriptif ne vaut que si nous pouvons en retenir et en embrasser à la fois tous les détails. Il faut que ces détails coexistent tous dans notre mémoire, comme ceux d'une toile peinte coexistent sous notre regard. Cela devient presque impossible, quand la description d'un objet déterminé comporte un quart d'heure de lecture. Plus elle s'allonge, et plus elle s'obscurcit. Les traits particuliers s'effacent et s'oublient à mesure qu'ils nous sont présentés ; et c'est ici qu'on peut dire que les arbres empêchent de voir le forêt. Toute description qui dépasse cinquante lignes cesse d'être clairement perceptible à un esprit de vigueur moyenne. On n'a plus alors qu'une série de peintures partielles dont la succession fatigue et accable.—*Jules*

<sup>1</sup> Émile Zola : *Une Page d'Amour*.

<sup>2</sup> The compiler of a dramatic version of Zola's story.

*Lemaître : Impressions de Théâtre, 8me série ; Une Page d'Amour.*

Moreover, since most description, as was said at the beginning, is merely accessory, it is well to learn how much can be done by rapid suggestion. Obviously a passing glimpse of the main aspect is often all that is desired.<sup>1</sup>

Examples of rapid suggestion.

Inch Keith is nothing more than a rock covered with a thin layer of earth, not wholly bare of grass, and very fertile of thistles. A small herd of cows grazes annually upon it in the summer. It seems never to have afforded to man or beast a permanent habitation.—*Johnson : Journey to the Western Islands.*

An ivory-faced and silvery-haired old woman opened the door. She had an evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy, but her manners were excellent.—*Stevenson : Jekyll and Hyde.*

Two other gentlemen had come out with him. One was a low-spirited gentleman of middle age, of a meagre habit, and a disconsolate face ; who kept his hands continually in the pockets of his scanty pepper-and-salt trousers, very large and dog's-eared from that custom ; and was not particularly well brushed or washed. The other, a full-sized, sleek, well-conditioned gentleman, in a blue coat with bright buttons, and a white cravat. This gentleman had a very red face, as if an undue proportion of the blood in his body were squeezed up into his head ; which perhaps accounted for his having also the appearance of being rather cold about the heart.—*Dickens : The Chimes.*

Doctor Pusey (who also never spoke to me) was not in the least a picturesque or tremendous figure, but only a sickly and rather ill put together English clerical gentleman, who never looked one in the face, or appeared aware of the state of the weather.

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<sup>1</sup> *Genung*, p. 337.

My own tutor was a dark-eyed, animated, pleasant, but not in the least impressive person, who walked with an unconscious air of assumption, noticeable by us juniors not to his advantage. Kynaston was ludicrously like a fat school-boy. Hussey, grim and brown, as I said, somewhat lank, incapable of jest, equally incapable of enthusiasm.—*Ruskin : Præterita*, xi.

Such is the poor moorland tract of country ; Zorndorf the centre of it—where the battle is likely to be : Zorndorf and environs, a bare quasi-island among these woods ; extensive bald crown of the landscape, girt with a frizzle of fir woods all round.—*Carlyle : Frederick the Great*.

A stout broad gentleman of sixty, perpendicular in attitude, rather showily dressed, and of gracious, ingenious and slightly elaborate manners.—*Carlyle : Life of John Sterling*.

His (Walpole's) new gallery is all gothicism, and gold, and crimson, and looking-glass.—*Gray to Thomas Wharton* (Letter lix).

Sometimes the rapid suggestion is achieved by a single detail, as of touch :

Whereupon, he turned round again, threw himself on his back at full length, and feeling the sheets cool, smooth, and refreshing, folded his arms, and slept instantaneously.—*Landor : Pentameron*.

or of sound :

Serene and beautiful are our autumnal days in Thessaly. We have many woods about us, and many woodland sounds among them.—*Landor : Pericles and Aspasia*.

or of colour :

He could just discern the cypresses of the old school garden, like two black lines down the yellow walls.—*Pater : Marius the Epicurean*.

The road, next day, passed below a town not less primitive, it might seem, than its rocky perch—white rocks that had long been glistening before him in the distance.—*Ibid.*

or of light :

He rode towards Tibur, under the early sunshine ; the marble of its villas glistening all the way before him on the hillside.—*Ibid.*

Suggestion by a single detail presented by a single adjective has been called epithet description.<sup>1</sup> This

**The Homeric** is common in Homer.<sup>2</sup> In modern epithet. literature it hardly occurs, outside of humorous writing, except in Carlyle. Indeed, the stock-epithet is hardly intended as descriptive. It is simply a more vivid means of reference. Carlyle's "lion Mirabeau" and "sea-green Robespierre" have, it is true, a certain picturesque force, but their office is rather to identify a character than to suggest him. For ordinary use the method becomes too easily tiresome to be valuable.

On the other hand, when the single adjective is not a stock epithet, but one apt enough to suggest as much of the main aspect as is desired for a particular purpose, the method by epithets has the advantage of conciseness. In this form it is not uncommon among historians :

Here they embarked again, steering southward over the *sunny* waters, in the stillness and solitude of the *leafy* hills, till they came to the outlet, and glided down the *peaceful* current, in the shade of the *tall* forests that overarched it.—*Parkman : Montcalm and Wolfe.*

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<sup>1</sup> See *Fletcher and Carpenter*, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "the far-darting Apollo," "the white-armed Hera," etc.

He admired the *awful majesty* of the Capitol, the *vast extent* of the baths of Caracalla and Diocletian, the *severe simplicity* of the Pantheon, the *massy greatness* of the amphitheatre of Titus, the *elegant architecture* of the theatre of Pompey and the Temple of Peace, and, above all, the *stately structure* of the Forum and column of Trajan.—*Gibbon: The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*<sup>1</sup>

But perhaps the most vivid rapid suggestion is that which gives, with little, if any, accessory detail, the *Description by effect.* effect upon the beholder or the actors. This is the dramatic method. It has been called, somewhat loosely, description by effect.<sup>2</sup> In its simplest form it occurs in many mediocre descriptions :

Towards evening we crossed, by a bridge, the river which makes the celebrated Fall of Fiers. The country at the bridge strikes the imagination with all the gloom and grandeur of Siberian solitude. The way makes a flexure, and the mountains, covered with trees, rise at once on the left hand and in the front. We desired our guides to show us the fall, and, dismounting, clambered over very rugged crags, till I began to wish that our curiosity might have been gratified with less trouble and danger. We came at last to a place where we could overlook the river, and saw a channel torn, as it seems, through black piles of stone, by which the stream is obstructed and broken, till it comes to a very deep descent, of such dreadful depth, that we were naturally inclined to turn aside our eyes.—*Johnson: A Journey to the Western Islands.*

Of the hills many may be called, with Homer's Ida, “abundant in springs,” but few can deserve the epithet which he bestows upon Pelion, by “waving their leaves.” They exhibit

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<sup>1</sup> Passages such as these, however, will serve to show how easily the method may lapse into the merely conventional.

<sup>2</sup> *Genung*, p. 342,

very little variety ; being almost wholly covered with dark heath, and even that seems to be checked in its growth. What is not heath is nakedness, a little diversified by now and then a stream rushing down the steep. An eye accustomed to flowery pastures and waving harvests is astonished and repelled by this wide extent of hopeless sterility. The appearance is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness, dismissed by nature from her care, and disinherited of her favours, left in its original elemental state, or quickened only with one sullen power of useless vegetation.—*Ibid.*

Much more vivid are the following :

And a breezy, goose-skinned, blue-nosed, red-eyed, stony-toed, tooth-chattering place it was to wait in in the winter time, as Toby Veck well knew.—*Dickens : The Chimes.*

I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning, and my way lay through a part of town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps. Street after street, and all the folks asleep—street after street, all lighted up as if for a procession and all as empty as a church—till at last I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman. All at once, I saw two figures : one a little man who was stumping along eastward at a good walk, and the other a girl of may be eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able down a cross street. Well, sir, the two ran into one another naturally enough at the corner ; and then came the horrible part of the thing ; for the man trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see. It wasn't like a man ; it was like some damned Juggernaut. I gave a view halloo, took to my heels, collared my gentleman, and brought him back to where there was already quite a group about the screaming child. He was perfectly cool and made no resistance, but gave me one look, so ugly that it brought out the sweat on me like running. The people who had turned out were the girl's own family ; and pretty soon, the doctor, for whom she had been sent, put in an appearance,

Well, the child was not much the worse, more frightened, according to the Sawbones ; and there you might have supposed would be an end to it. But there was one curious circumstance. I had taken a loathing to my gentleman at first sight. So had the child's family, which was only natural. But the doctor's case was what struck me. He was the usual cut-and-dry apothecary, of no particular age and color, with a strong Edinburgh accent, and about as emotional as a bagpipe. Well, sir, he was like the rest of us ; every time he looked at my prisoner I saw that Sawbones turn sick and white with the desire to kill him.<sup>1</sup>—*Stevenson : Jekyll and Hyde.*

And so, in a sorry plight, I came to an opening in the bushes, where a great black pool lay in front of me, whitened with snow (as I thought) at the sides, till I saw it was only foam-froth.

Now, though I could swim with great ease and comfort, and feared no depth of water, when I could fairly come to it, yet I had no desire to go over head and ears into this great pool, being so cramped and weary, and cold enough in all conscience, though wet only up to the middle, not counting my arms and shoulders. And the look of this black pit was enough to stop one from diving into it, even on a hot summer's day, with sunshine on the water ; I mean, if the sun ever shone there. As it was, I shuddered and drew back ; not alone at the pool itself and the black air there was about it, but also at the whirling manner, and wisping of white threads upon it in stripy circles round and round ; and the centre still as jet.—*Blackmore : Lorna Doone.*

I do not know if I was what you call afraid ; but my heart beat like a bird's, both quick and little ; and there was a dimness came before my eyes which I continually rubbed away, and which continually returned. As for hope, I had none ; but only a darkness of despair and a sort of anger against all the world that made me long to sell my life as dear as I was able. I tried to pray, I remember, but that same hurry of my mind, like a man running, would

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<sup>1</sup> This is the method by which Coleridge suggests the grisly aspect of the Ancient Mariner. (Part vii, 11-14.)

not suffer me to think upon the words ; and my chief wish was to have the thing begin and be done with it.—*Stevenson: Kidnapped.*

The singers were (as usual) deplorable, but there was one girl (she called herself the Niccolina) with little voice and less beauty ; but with the utmost justness of ear, the strongest expression of countenance, the most speaking eyes, the greatest vivacity and variety of gesture. Her first appearance instantly fixed their attention ; the tumult sunk at once, or if any murmur rose, it was hushed by a general cry for silence. Her first air ravished everybody ; they forgot their prejudices, they forgot that they did not understand a word of the language ; they entered into all the humour of the part, made her repeat all her songs, and continued their transports, their laughter, and applause to the end of the piece.—*Gray to Count Algarotti, Cambridge, September 9, 1763.*

I had seen also for the third time, by the Chartreuse torrent, the most wonderful of all Alpine birds—a grey, fluttering stealthy creature, about the size of a sparrow, but of colder grey, and more graceful, which haunts the sides of the fiercest torrents. There is something more strange in it than in the sea-gull—that seems a powerful creature ; and the power of the sea, not of a kind so adverse, so hopelessly destructive ; but this small creature, silent, tender and light, almost like a moth in its low and irregular flight,—almost touching with its wings the crests of waves that would overthrow a granite wall, and haunting the hollows of the black, cold, herbless rocks that are continually shaken by their spray, has perhaps the nearest approach to the look of a spiritual existence I know in animal life.—*Ruskin : Praterita, xi.*

Suggestion by effect<sup>1</sup> has its chief value in portraits. In descriptions of scenery it involves what Ruskin

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<sup>1</sup> The method by effects seems to M. Brunetière peculiarly artistic : “ Il ne me reste plus qu'à louer dans *l'Évangéliste* les qualités ordinaires de M. Daudet, mais plus saines, comme je l'ai déjà dit, plus libre de toute préoccupation d'école. Dans les meilleures pages de *l'Évangéliste*, la sobriété de la description est

calls the *pathetic fallacy*,<sup>1</sup> and by becoming unduly emotional may become untrue. How effective it may

The "pathetic fallacy," be, however, not only in description of places, but even in detailed description of places is abundantly shown in Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher*.

More minute discrimination of descriptive methods would be but confusing. Indeed, of the methods

The choice of words. already discussed, none is to be considered as essentially independent; each combines freely with the others. And whatever the method or combination of methods, the force of any description depends, of course, not only on the power to seize the most active source of suggestion, but quite as much on the power to find for it the apt word. It would be gratuitous to say over again for descriptive diction what is always true of diction in general. But it may be worth while to consider some common misconceptions, and to apply briefly one or two fundamental maxims.

It is a common error, at least among students, to suppose that excellence in description is measured by

An error as to figures. the fervour of imaginative language and the exaggeration of figure. The

devenue, comme chez les vrais maîtres, un élément de leur charme et de leur beauté. Au lieu de peindre par l'accumulation des détails, et la nouveauté des mots, et leurs rapprochements imprévus, c'est l'impression de la figure ou du paysage sur l'esprit que M. Daudet dégage et résume en quatres lignes."—Brunetière : *Le Roman Naturaliste*, p. 390.

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin : *Modern Painters*, iii. Cf. also, Fletcher and Carpenter, p. 54.

world is weary of a style tending too readily to the grandiose and even the bombastic. Language is not to be tortured by the craze for extraordinary adjectives. Sensationalism, moreover, is as futile as it is

*The sensational.* ludicrous, and this because it almost always marks weakness. Yet the plea for sanity should not ignore the fact that the struggle for the startling and the bizarre indicates a wholesome discontent with the trite and the commonplace. In ordinary intercourse things may be *lovely* or *nice* or *quaint* when they are not *awful* or *splendid*; but nobody pretends that these adjectives are descriptive. They are used to

*The trite.* avoid the trouble of description. In the matter of figures, moreover, there is little to choose between the sensational and the trite. The true concern of the artist is exhibited sternly by Maupassant :

Ayant, en outre, posé cette vérité qu'il n'y a pas, de par le monde entier, deux grains de sable, deux mouches, deux mains ou deux nez absolument pareils, il me forçait à exprimer, en quelques phrases, un être ou un objet de manière à le *particulariser nettement*, à le distinguer de tous les autres êtres ou de tous les autres objets de même race ou de même espèce.

“Quand vous passez, me disait-il, devant un épicier assis sur sa porte, devant un concierge qui fume sa pipe, devant une station de fiacres, montrez-moi cet épicier et ce concierge, leur pose, toute leur apparence physique contenant aussi, indiquée par l'adresse de l'image, toute leur nature morale, de façon à ce que je ne les confonde avec aucun autre épicier ou avec aucun autre concierge, et faites-moi voir, par un seul mot, en quoi un cheval de fiacre ne ressemble pas aux cinquante autres qui le suivent et le précédent.”—*Guy de Maupassant: Pierre et Jean, Avant-propos.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by *Fletcher and Carpenter*, p. 6.

*Particulariser nettement*—it is the error of indolence to suppose that such a habit robs expression of its glow and colour.

A little yellow bird still continues to make a sibilous shivering noise in the tops of tall woods.—*Gilbert White : Natural History of Selborne*.

It was one of those mornings such as come only in the early autumn. The air was crisp, sonorous, and still.—*A. S. Hardy : Passe Rose*.

It remained to choose a beast of burden. Now a horse is a fine lady among animals, flighty, timid, delicate in eating, of tender health ; he is too valuable and too restive to be left alone, so that you are chained to your brute as to a fellow galley slave ; a dangerous road puts him out of his wits ; in short, he's an uncertain and exacting ally, and adds thirty-fold to the troubles of the voyager. What I required was something cheap and small and hardy, and of a stolid and peaceful temper ; and all these requisites pointed to a donkey.—*Stevenson : Travels with a Donkey*.

Of figures be it said only that they are subject to the same law. Equally foolish are they that would

Figures subject to the common law. dispense with them and they that use them at random. “The horse is a fine

lady among animals,” is good, not because it is a figure, nor merely because it is striking, but because it is apt. If Holmes and Lowell have set an American fashion of undue dependence on figure, the fault is not theirs. It is the fault of unintelligent imitation, the abuse of the pathetic fallacy, the heresy of Pope. Wherever a figure is mere embroidery, it is pretty sure to be bad. Wherever it is spontaneous and apt, there is little more to be said.

Against the abuse of figures, however, it is often wise to recommend the study of a style like Defoe's.

The necessity of the concrete. Defoe has hardly any figures, because he is unemotional. But without them he secures effects that are always clear and often vivid by sheer abundance of concrete detail. This is the first business of descriptive diction—with or without figures, to speak in the concrete. Concreteness is the force of Defoe, the force of Stevenson, the force of all writers between them who have succeeded in giving to their suggestions a moving power. Cowper's contentment is moving so soon as it speaks through tangible objects :

They think a fine estate, a large conservatory, a hothouse rich as a West Indian garden, things of consequence ; visit them with pleasure, and muse upon them with ten times more. I am pleased with a frame of four lights, doubtful whether the few pines it contains will ever be worth a farthing ; amuse myself with a greenhouse which Lord Bute's gardener could take upon his back and walk away with ; and when I have paid it the accustomed visit, and watered it, and given it air, I say to myself—" This is not mine, 'tis a plaything lent me for the present ; I must leave it soon."—*Cowper to Newton, May 3, 1780.*

If anyone doubts that the formula for description is simply concreteness plus aptness, let him study minutely the prologue to the "Canterbury Tales."

Finally, be it said that descriptive power is not confined to one or two parts of speech. It was said by the reviewer of certain recent short stories that they resembled "an exercise in composition for the abolition of the verb."<sup>1</sup> The same charge may be

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<sup>1</sup>*Nation*, 57: 452.

brought against many pieces more purely descriptive than these. Now if the verb is the most essential

The import- part of speech in narrative, it is none  
ance of the verb. the less most valuable in description.

To confine one's elaboration, then, to adjectives and nouns, is not only to burden one's sentences, but also to ignore an excellent means of conciseness in suggestion. Let all the main words in the sentence tell; let the verb be as full of suggestion as the noun and the adjective, and the description is spared many an overburdened phrase and lagging clause.

A large-headed, dwarfish individual, of smoke-bleared aspect, *shambles* forward, opening his blue lips, for there is sense in him, and *croaks*, "Alight then, and give up your arms."—*Carlyle: French Revolution.*<sup>1</sup>

The choice of details, their number, the method by which they are presented, the choice of words,—these four headings will be found convenient, alike for the consideration of the selections in this volume and for criticism of the student's own work.

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<sup>1</sup>*Cf.* pp. xi, xviii–xix, xxxiv.

## LIST OF REFERENCES IN THE INTRODUCTION.

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- Brunetière, Ferdinand*, Le Roman Naturaliste.
- Carpenter, G. R.*,<sup>1</sup> Exercises in Rhetoric and English Composition (New York and London, Macmillan & Company).
- Fletcher and Carpenter*, Theme-Writing, by J. B. Fletcher and G. R. Carpenter (Boston, Allyn & Bacon).
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- Stevenson, Robert Louis*, Memories and Portraits.

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<sup>1</sup> Almost any other good text-book of rhetoric will meet all necessities of citation ; for example, Bain's standard work, or, for more recent and more popular presentation, Barrett Wendell's *English Composition* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons).



# SPECIMENS OF PROSE DESCRIPTION

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## I.

### Ancient Athens.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

From *Historical Sketches* (I, iii).<sup>1</sup> This selection is annotated to suggest questions for class discussion of the following selections. For further suggestions of the same sort, see *Genung's Handbook of Rhetorical Analysis*, pp. 156-186; *Fletcher and Carpenter's Theme Writing*, pp. 33-63.

The passage, as a whole, exemplifies description for purposes of exposition. A simpler example of the same sort occurs at p. 13 of Lamont's *Specimens of Exposition*, in this series.

If we would know what a University is, considered in its elementary idea, we must betake ourselves to the first and most celebrated home of European literature and source of European civilization, to the bright and beautiful Athens,<sup>2</sup>—Athens, whose schools drew to her bosom, and then sent back again to the business of life, the youth of the Western World for a long thou-

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<sup>1</sup> Printed by kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Company.

<sup>2</sup> *Bright and beautiful Athens*, epithet of main physical aspect, followed by the presentation, in a few details, of the main intellectual aspect, *a central metropolis of knowledge*.

sand years. Seated on the verge of the continent, the city seemed hardly suited for the duties of a central metropolis of knowledge ; yet, what it lost in convenience of approach, it gained in its neighborhood to the traditions of the mysterious East, and in the loveliness of the region in which it lay. Hither, then, as to a sort of ideal land, where all archetypes of the great and the fair were found in substantial being, and all departments of truth explored, and all diversities of intellectual power exhibited, where taste and philosophy were majestically enthroned as in a royal court, where there was no sovereignty but that of the mind, and no nobility but that of genius, where professors were rulers, and princes did homage, hither flocked continually from the very corners of the *orbis terrarum*, the many-tongued generation, just rising, or just risen into manhood, in order to gain wisdom.

\* Pisistratus had in an early age discovered and nursed the infant genius of his people, and Cimon, after the Persian War, had given it a home. That war had established the naval supremacy of Athens ; she had become an imperial state ; and the Ionians, bound to her by the double chain of kindred and of subjection, were importing into her both their merchandise and their civilization. The arts and the philosophy of the Asiatic coast were easily carried across the sea, and there was Cimon, as I have said, with his ample fortune, ready to receive them with due honours. Not content with patronising their professors, he built the first of those noble porticos, of

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\* Two paragraphs of summary narrative, to heighten the significance of the description.

which we hear so much in Athens, and he formed the groves, which in process of time became the celebrated Academy. Planting is one of the most graceful, as in Athens it was one of the most beneficent, of 5 employments. Cimon took in hand the wild wood, pruned and dressed it, and laid it out with handsome walks and welcome fountains. Nor, while hospitable to the authors of the city's civilization, was he ungrateful to the instruments of her prosperity. His 10 trees extended their cool, umbrageous branches over the merchants, who assembled in the Agora, for many generations.

Those merchants certainly had deserved that act of bounty ; for all the while their ships had been carrying forth the intellectual fame of Athens to the western world. Then commenced what may be called her University existence. Pericles, who succeeded Cimon both in the government and in the patronage of art, is said by Plutarch to have entertained the idea of making 15 Athens the capital of federated Greece : in this he failed, but his encouragement of such men as Phidias and Anaxagoras led the way to her acquiring a far more lasting sovereignty over a far wider empire. Little understanding the sources of her own greatness, 20 Athens would go to war : peace is the interest of a seat of commerce and the arts ; but to war she went ; yet to her, whether peace or war, it mattered not. The political power of Athens waned and disappeared ; kingdoms rose and fell ; centuries rolled 25 away,—they did but bring fresh triumphs to the city of the poet and the sage.<sup>4</sup> There at length the

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<sup>4</sup> Note the force of the specific.

swarthy<sup>6</sup> Moor and Spaniard were seen to meet the blue-eyed<sup>6</sup> Gaul; and the Cappadocian, late subject of Mithridates, gazed without alarm at the haughty conquering Roman. Revolution after revolution passed over the face of Europe, as well as of Greece,<sup>5</sup> but still she was there,—Athens, the city of mind,—as radiant, as splendid, as delicate, as young, as ever she had been.

“Many a more fruitful coast or isle is washed by the blue *Ægean*, many a spot is there more beautiful<sup>10</sup> or sublime to see, many a territory more ample; but there was one charm in Attica, which in the same perfection was nowhere else. The deep pastures<sup>7</sup> of Arcadia, the plain<sup>8</sup> of Argos, the Thessalian vale,<sup>9</sup> these had not the gift; Boeotia, which lay to its immediate<sup>15</sup> north, was notorious for its very want of it. The heavy atmosphere of that Boeotia might be good for vegetation, but it was associated in popular belief with the dulness of the Boeotian intellect: on the contrary, the special purity, elasticity, clearness, and salubrity<sup>20</sup> of the air of Attica, fit concomitant and emblem of its genius, did that for it which earth did not;—it brought out every bright hue and tender shade of the landscape over which it was spread, and would have

<sup>5</sup> Epithet description. See p. xxxix.

<sup>6</sup> This paragraph presents one main physical trait, hinted at before, but here specified with delicate precision (*purity, elasticity, etc.*), and used as dominant.

<sup>7</sup> Passing use of a single detail to suggest the different character of the neighbouring countries (*cf.* the selection at the bottom of p. xxiv). Boeotia, as being in direct contrast, receives more space (*cf.* p. xxix).

illuminated the face even of a more bare and rugged country.

<sup>8</sup> A confined triangle, perhaps fifty miles its greatest length, and thirty its greatest breadth ; two elevated rocky barriers, meeting at an angle ; three prominent mountains, commanding the plain,—Parnes, Pentelicus, and Hymettus ; an unsatisfactory soil ; some streams, not always full ;—such is about the report which the agent of a London Company would have made of Attica. He would report that the climate was mild ; the hills were limestone ; there was plenty of good marble ; more pasture land than at first survey might have been expected, sufficient certainly for sheep and goats ; fisheries productive ; silver mines once, but long since worked out ; figs fair ; oil first-rate ; olives in profusion. But what he would not think of noting down, was, that that olive tree was so choice in nature and so noble in shape, that it excited a religious veneration ; and that it took so kindly to the light soil, as to expand into woods upon the open plain, and to climb up and fringe the hills. He would not think of writing word to his employers, how that clear air, of which I have spoken, brought out, yet blended and subdued, the colours on the marble, till

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<sup>8</sup> This paragraph proceeds to detailed description, as follows : (1) outline and salient features, merely enumerated, (2) details deliberately enumerated as in an inventory, (3) the same details worked up in picturesque aspects, and other picturesque details added, the clarity of the atmosphere dominating throughout. The figures are few and simple (*fringe, cheek, carpeted, chain, etc.*), but always apt and precise. Precision, indeed, is a main trait of the description, a precision that does not exclude emotional appreciation.

they had a softness and a harmony for all their richness, which in a picture looks exaggerated, yet is after all within the truth. He would not tell, how that same delicate and brilliant atmosphere freshened up the pale olive, till the olive forgot its monotony, and its 5 cheek glowed like the arbutus or beech of the Umbrian hills. He would say nothing of the thyme and thousand fragrant herbs which carpeted Hymettus ; he would hear nothing of the hum of its bees ;<sup>9</sup> nor take much account of the rare flavour of its honey, since 10 Gozo and Minorca were sufficient for the English demand. He<sup>10</sup> would look over the *Aegean* from the height he had ascended ; he would follow with his eye the chain of islands, which, starting from the Sunian headland, seemed to offer the fabled divinities 15 of Attica, when they would visit their Ionian cousins, a sort of viaduct thereto across the sea : but that fancy would not occur to him ; nor any admiration of the dark violet billows<sup>11</sup> with their white edges down below ; nor<sup>11</sup> of those graceful, fan-like jets of silver 20 upon the rocks, which slowly rise aloft like water spirits from the deep, then shiver, and break, and

<sup>9</sup> Thus far light has been the main element, as it is throughout. Here sound is introduced. Then colour, which has received only allusions, is defined in the *violet* and *white* of the billows, the *roseate golden hue* of the jutting crags, etc.

<sup>10</sup> Note in this sentence the careful, yet unobtrusive, indication of the point of view (p. xxv).

<sup>11</sup> From this point the description, having assured clearness, warms to more sympathetic presentation, keeping the clarity of the atmosphere dominant. With the introduction of motion come also more vivid and more imaginative figures (*fan-like*, *water spirits*, *shiver*, *shroud*, etc.), but without any loss of precision.

spread, and shroud themselves, and disappear, in a soft mist of foam ; nor of the gentle, incessant heaving and panting of the whole liquid plain ; nor of the long waves, keeping steady time, like a line of soldiers, as they resound upon the hollow shore,—he would not begin to notice that restless living element at all, except to bless his stars that he was not upon it. Nor the distinct detail, nor the refined colouring, nor the graceful outline and roseate golden hue of the 10 jutting crags, nor the bold shadows cast from Otus or Laurium by the declining sun ;—our agent of a mercantile firm would not value these matters even at a low figure. Rather we must turn for the sympathy we seek to yon pilgrim student<sup>12</sup> come from a semi-15 barbarous land to that small corner of the earth, as to a shrine, where he might take his fill of gazing on those emblems and coruscations of invisible unoriginate perfection. It was the stranger from a remote province, from Britain or from Mauritania, who in a 20 scene so different from that of his chilly, woody swamps,<sup>13</sup> or of his fiery choking sands,<sup>14</sup> learned at once what a real University must be, by coming to understand the sort of country, which was its suitable home.

Nor<sup>15</sup> was this all that a University required, and

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<sup>12</sup> Finally the presentation is concentrated in its effect (p. xl) upon a typical student, whose native country is briefly hinted, as before, by a single characteristic detail.

<sup>13</sup> Though the appeal of Athens was to the poet, the scholar, the student, rather than to the man of business, yet it is not to be thought of as lacking in practical advantages. The relation of these two paragraphs shows that the progress of the description is logical, and this because its purpose is expository. The remainder of the passage is almost entirely expository description.

found in Athens. No one, even there, could live on poetry. If the students at that famous place had nothing better than bright hues and soothing sounds, they would not have been able or disposed to turn their residence there to much account. Of course 5 they must have the means of living, nay, in a certain sense, of enjoyment, if Athens was to be an Alma Mater at the time, or to remain afterwards a pleasant thought in their memory. And so they had : be it recollect that Athens was a port, and a mart of 10 trade, perhaps the first in Greece ; and this was very much to the point, when a number of strangers were ever flocking to it, whose combat was to be with intellectual, not physical difficulties, and who claimed to have their bodily wants supplied, that they might be 15 at leisure to set about furnishing their minds. Now, barren as was the soil of Attica, and bare the face of the country, yet it had only too many resources for an elegant, nay luxurious abode there. So abundant were the imports of the place, that it was a common 20 saying, that the productions, which were found singly elsewhere, were brought all together in Athens. Corn and wine, the staple of subsistence in such a climate, came from the isles of the *Ægean* ; fine wool and carpeting from Asia Minor ; slaves, as now, from the 25 Euxine, and timber too ; and iron and brass from the coasts of the Mediterranean. The Athenian did not condescend to manufactures himself, but encouraged them in others ; and a population of foreigners caught at the lucrative occupation both for home consumption 30 and for exportation. Their cloth, and other textures for dress and furniture, and their hardware—for in-

stance, armour—were in great request. Labour was cheap ; stone and marble in plenty ; and the taste and skill, which at first were devoted to public buildings, as temples and porticos, were in course of time applied 5 to the mansions of public men. If nature did much for Athens, it is undeniable that art did much more.

## II.

### Pestilence.

I. EDWARD GIBBON.

II. AUGUSTUS H. JESSOPP.

From *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (cap. xlivi), by Edward Gibbon ; and *The Black Death in East Anglia*, by Augustus H. Jessopp.<sup>1</sup> These selections are printed together for comparison. It is suggested, first, that the comparison be enlarged by study of the Egyptian plagues in Exodus (capp. vii-xii), of the pestilence at Athens as described by Thucydides (Book ii, § 47-53, of Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*, or of Dr. Hecker's *Black Death* (translated in Cassell's National Library, paper) ; and, secondly, that comparisons be introduced throughout the study of this volume, of one selection with another, or of any selection with some parallel drawn from the teacher's reading.

## I.

ÆTHIOPIA and Egypt have been stigmatized in every age as the original source and seminary of the plague. In a damp, hot, stagnating air, this African fever is generated from the putrefaction of animal substances, and especially from the swarms of locusts, not less destructive to mankind in their death than in their lives. The fatal disease which depopulated the earth in the time of Justinian and his successors first ap-

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<sup>1</sup> Printed, by kind permission of Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons, from *The Coming of the Friars, and Other Essays*.

peared in the neighbourhood of Pelusium, between the Serbonian bog and the eastern channel of the Nile. From thence, tracing as it were a double path, it spread to the East, over Syria, Persia, and the Indies, 5 and penetrated to the West, along the coast of Africa and over the continent of Europe. In the spring of the second year Constantinople, during three or four months, was visited by the pestilence; and Procopius, who observed its progress and symptoms with 10 the eyes of a physician, has emulated the skill and diligence of Thucydides in the description of the plague of Athens. The infection was sometimes announced by the visions of a distempered fancy, and the victim despaired as soon as he had heard the 15 menace and felt the stroke of an invisible spectre. But the greater number, in their beds, in the streets, in their usual occupation, were surprised by a slight fever; so slight, indeed, that neither the pulse nor the colour of the patient gave any signs of the approaching danger. The same, the next, or the succeeding day, it was declared by the swelling of the glands, particularly those of the groin, of the armpits, and under the ear; and when these buboes or tumours were opened, they were found to contain a *coal*, or 20 25 black substance; of the size of a lentil. If they came to a just swelling and suppuration, the patient was saved by this kind and natural discharge of the morbid humour; but if they continued hard and dry, a mortification quickly ensued, and the fifth day was commonly the term of his life. The fever was often accompanied with lethargy or delirium; the bodies of the sick were covered with black pustules or car-

buncles, the symptoms of immediate death ; and in the constitutions too feeble to produce an eruption, the vomiting of blood was followed by a mortification of the bowels. To pregnant women the plague was generally mortal ; yet one infant was drawn alive from his dead mother, and three mothers survived the loss of their infected foetus. Youth was the most perilous season, and the female sex was less susceptible than the male ; but every rank and profession was attacked with indiscriminate rage, and many of those who escaped were deprived of the use of their speech, without being secure from a return of the disorder. The physicians of Constantinople were zealous and skilful ; but their art was baffled by the various symptoms and pertinacious vehemence of the disease : 15 the same remedies were productive of contrary effects, and the event capriciously disappointed their prognostics of death or recovery. The order of funerals and the right of sepulchres were confounded ; those who were left without friends or servants lay 20 unburied in the streets, or in their desolate houses ; and a magistrate was authorized to collect the promiscuous heaps of dead bodies, to transport them by land or water, and to inter them in deep pits beyond the precincts of the city. Their own danger and the 25 prospect of public distress awakened some remorse in the minds of the most vicious of mankind : the confidence of health again revived their passions and habits ; but philosophy must disdain the observation of Procopius, that the lives of such men were guarded 30 by the peculiar favour of fortune or of Providence. He forgot, or perhaps he secretly recollects, that the

plague had touched the person of Justinian himself ; but the abstemious diet of the emperor may suggest, as in the case of Socrates, a more rational and honourable cause for his recovery. During his sickness the 5 public consternation was expressed in the habits of the citizens ; and their idleness and despondence occasioned a general scarcity in the capital of the East.

## II.

THIS is the earliest instance I have yet met with of 10 the appearance of the plague among us, and as it is the earliest, so does it appear to have been one of the most frightful visitations from which any town or village in Suffolk or Norfolk suffered during the time the pestilence lasted. On the 1st of May another 15 court was held, fifteen more deaths are recorded—thirteen men and two women. *Seven of them without heirs.* On the 3rd of November, apparently when the panic abated, again the court met. In the six months that had passed thirty-six more deaths had occurred, 20 and *thirteen more households* had been left without a living soul to represent them. In this little community, in six months' time, twenty-one families had been absolutely obliterated—men, women and children—and of the rest it is difficult to see how there can 25 have been a single house in which there was not one dead. Meanwhile, some time in September, the parson of the parish had fallen a victim to the scourge, and on the 2nd of October another was instituted in his room. Who reaped the harvest ? The 30 tithe sheaf too—how was it garnered in the barn ?

And the poor kine at milking time? Hush! Let us pass on.

The plague had apparently fallen with the greatest virulence upon the coast and along the water-courses, but already in the spring had reached the neighbourhood of Norwich, and was showing an unsparing impartiality in its visitation. At Earlham and Wyton and Horsford, at Taverham and Bramerton, all of them villages within five miles of the cathedral, the parsons had already died. Round the great city, then the second city in England, village was being linked to village closer and closer every day in one ghastly chain of death. What a ring-fence of horror and contagion for all comers and goers to overpass!

For two months Thomas de Methwold, the official,<sup>15</sup> stayed where he had been bidden to stay, in the thick of it all, at the palace. On the 29th of May he could bear it no longer. Do you ask was he afraid? Not so! We shall see that he was no craven; but the bravest men are not reckless, and least of all are they<sup>20</sup> the men who are careless about the lives or the feelings of others. The great cemetery of the city of Norwich was at this time actually within the cathedral Close. The whole of the large space enclosed between the nave of the cathedral on the south and the<sup>25</sup> bishop's palace on the east, and stretching as far as the Erpingham gate on the west, was one huge graveyard. When the country parsons come to present themselves for institution at the palace, they had to pass straight across this cemetery. The tiny church-yards of the city, demonstrably very little if at all

larger than they are now, were soon choked, the soil rising higher and higher above the level of the street, which even to this day is in some cases five or six feet below the soppy sod piled up within the old enclosures.  
5 To the great cemetery within the close the people brought their dead, the tumrels discharging their load of corpses all day long, tilting them into the huge pits made ready to receive them ; the stench of putrefaction palpitating through the air, and borne by the  
10 gusts of the western breeze through the windows of the palace, where the Bishop's official sat, as the candidates knelt before him and received institution with the usual formalities. It was hard upon him, it was doubly so upon those who had travelled a long day's  
15 journey through the pestilential villages ; and on the 30th of May the official removed from Norwich to Terlyng, in Essex, where the Bishop had a residence ; there he remained for the next ten days, during which time he instituted thirty-nine more parsons to their  
20 several benefices. By this time other towns in the diocese had felt the force of the visitation. Ipswich had been smitten, and Stowmarket, and East Dereham—how many more we cannot tell. Then the news came that the Bishop had returned ; Thomas de Methwold  
25 was at once ordered back to Norwich—come what might, that was his post ; there he should stay, whether to live or die.

How could it be otherwise ? In the two counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, at least *nineteen* religious houses  
30 were left without prior or abbot. We may be quite sure that where the chief ruler dropped off the

brethren of the house and the army of servants and hangers-on did not escape. What happened at the great Abbey of St. Edmund's we know not yet, and until we get more light it is idle to conjecture, but, as a man stands in that vast graveyard at Bury, and looks around him, he can hardly help trying—trying, but failing—to imagine what the place must have looked like when the plague was raging. What a Valley of Hinnom it must have been ! Those three mighty churches, all within a stone's throw of one another, 10 and one of them just one hundred feet longer than the cathedral at Norwich, sumptuous with costly offerings, and miracles of splendour within—and outside ghastly heaps of corruption, and piles of corpses waiting their turn to be covered up with an inch or two of earth. 15 Who can adequately realize the horrors of that awful summer ? In the desolate swamps through which the sluggish Bure crawls reluctantly to mingle its waters with the Yare ; by the banks of the Waveney where the little Bungay nunnery had been a refuge for the 20 widow, the forsaken, or the devout for centuries ; in the valley of the Nar—the Norfolk Holy Land—where seven monasteries of one sort or another clustered, each distant from the other but a few short miles—among the ooze and sedge and chill loneliness of the 25 Broads, where the tall reeds wave and whisper, and all else is silent—the glorious buildings with their sumptuous churches were little better than centres of contagion. From the stricken towns people fled to the monasteries, lying away there in their seclusion, 30 lonely, favoured of God. If there was hope anywhere it must be there. As frightened widows and orphans

flocked to these havens of refuge, they carried the Black Death with them, and when they dropped death-stricken at the doors, they left the contagion behind them as their only legacy. Guilty wretches with a  
5 load of crime upon their consciences—desperate as far as this world was concerned, and ready for any act of wickedness should the occasion arrive—shud-  
dered lest they should go down to burning flame for  
ever now that there was none to shrieve them or to  
10 give the *viaticum* to any late penitent in his agony. In the tall towers by the wayside the bells hung mute ; no hands to ring them or none to answer to their call. Meanwhile, across the lonely fields, toiling dismally, and oftentimes missing the track—for who should guide  
15 them or show the path ?—parson and monk and trembling nun made the best of their way to Norwich ; their errand to seek admission to the vacant prefer-  
ment. Think of them, after miles of dreary travelling, reaching the city gates at last, and shudderingly  
20 threading the filthy alleys which then served as streets, stepping back into doorways to give the dead carts passage, and jostled by lepers and outcasts, the touch of whose garments was itself a horror. Think of them staggering across the great cemetery and stum-  
25 bling over the rotting carcases not yet committed to the earth, breathing all the while the tainted breath of corruption—sickening, loathsome ! Think of them returning as they came, going over the same ground as before, and compelled to gaze again at

Think of them foot-sore, half-famished, hardly daring to buy bread and meat for their hunger, or to beg a cup of cold water for Christ's sake, or entreat shelter for the night in their faintness and weariness, lest men should cry out at them—"Look! the Black Death <sup>5</sup> has clutched another of the doomed!"

### III.

#### Paris Before the Second Empire.

GEORGE DU MAURIER.

From *Peter Ibbetson*.<sup>1</sup> This selection is intended to exemplify the range of suggestion (p. xi) and the method of simple enumeration by narrative (p. xxx). Observe also the recurring suggestion of the aspect of the whole, and the frequent use of bold figures.

Other examples of the cumulative method, with or without narrative, may be found in any good guide book, or better in Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer's *English Cathedrals*; in Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, in Lamb's *Old Margate Hoy (Last Essays of Elia)*, in Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, in Stevenson's *Across the Plains*, and in many familiar descriptions by Dickens, for example, in the third chapter of *David Copperfield*.

As we grew older and wiser we had permission to extend our explorations to Meudon, Versailles, St. Germain, and other delightful places; to ride thither on hired horses, after having duly learned to ride at the famous "School of Equitation," in the Rue Duphot.

Also, we swam in those delightful summer baths in the Seine, that are so majestically called "Schools of Natation," and became past masters in "la coupe" (a stroke no other Englishman but ourselves has ever

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<sup>1</sup>Copyright, 1891, Harper & Brothers. Printed by kind permission of the publishers.

been quite able to manage), and in all the different delicate "nuances" of header-taking—"la coulante," "la hussarde," "la tête-bêche," "la tout ce que vous voudrez."

Also, we made ourselves at home in Paris, especially 5 old Paris.

For instance, there was the island of St. Louis, with its stately old mansions *entre cour et jardin*, behind grim stone portals and high walls, where great magistrates and lawyers dwelt in dignified seclusion—the 10 nobles of the robe; but where once had dwelt, in days gone by, the greater nobles of the sword—crusaders, perhaps, and knights templars, like Brian de Bois Guilbert.

And that other more famous island, la Cité, where 15 Paris itself was born, where Notre Dame reared its twin towers above the melancholy, gray, leprous walls and dirty brown roofs of the Hôtel-Dieu.

Pathetic little tumble-down old houses, all out of drawing and perspective, nestled like old spiders' 20 webs between the buttresses of the great cathedral; and on the two sides of the little square in front (the Place du Parvis Notre Dame) stood ancient stone dwellings, with high slate roofs and elaborately-wrought iron balconies. They seemed to have such 25 romantic histories that I never tired of gazing at them, and wondering what the histories could be; and now I think of it, one of these very dwellings must have been the Hôtel de Gondelaurier, where, according to the most veracious historian that ever was, poor 30 Esmeralda once danced and played the tambourine to divert the fair damosel Fleur-de-Lys de Gondelaurier

and her noble friends, all of whom she so transcended in beauty, purity, goodness, and breeding (although she was but an untaught, wandering gypsy girl, out of the gutter) ; and there, before them all and the gay archer, she was betrayed to her final undoing by her goat, whom she had so imprudently taught how to spell the beloved name of "Phébus."

Close by was the Morgue, that grawsome building which the great etcher Méryon has managed to invest with some weird fascination akin to that it had for me in those days—and has now, as I see it with the charmed eyes of Memory.

La Morgue ! what a fatal twang there is about the very name !

15 After gazing one's fill at the horrors within (as became a healthy-minded English boy) it was but a step to the equestrian statute of Henri Quatre, on the Pont-Neuf (the oldest bridge in Paris, by the way) ; there, astride his long-tailed charger, he smiled, *le roy vert et galant*, just midway between either bank of the historic river, just where it was most historic ; and turned his back on the Paris of the Bourgeois King with the pear-shaped face and the mutton-chop whiskers.

25 And there one stood, spellbound in indecision, like the ass of Buridan between two sacks of oats ; for on either side, north or south of the Pont-Neuf, were to be found enchanting slums, all more attractive the ones than the others, winding up and down hill and 30 round about and in and out, like haunting illustrations by Gustave Doré to *Drolatrick Tales* by Balzac (not seen or read by me till many years later, I beg to say).

Dark, narrow, silent, deserted streets that would turn up afterward in many a nightmare—with the gutter in the middle and towerlets and stone posts all along the sides ; and high fantastic walls (where it was *défendu d'afficher*), with bits of old battlement at the top, and overhanging boughs of sycamore and lime, and behind them gray old gardens that dated from the days of Louis le Hutin and beyond ! And suggestive names printed in old rusty iron letters at the street corners—“Rue Videgousset,” “Rue Coupe-gorge,”<sup>10</sup> “Rue de la Vieille Truanderie,” “Impasse de la Tour de Nesle,” etc., that appealed to the imagination like a chapter from Hugo or Dumas.

And the way to these was by long, tortuous, busy thoroughfares, most irregularly flagged, and all alive<sup>15</sup> with strange, delightful people in blue blouses, brown woolen tricots, wooden shoes, red and white cotton nightcaps, rags and patches ; most graceful girls, with pretty, self-respecting feet, and flashing eyes, and no head-dress but their own hair ; gay, fat hags, all<sup>20</sup> smile ; thin hags, with faces of appalling wickedness or misery ; precociously witty little gutter-imps of either sex ; and such cripples ! jovial hunchbacks, lusty blind beggars, merry creeping paralytics, scrofulous wretches who joked and punned about<sup>25</sup> their sores ; light-hearted, genial mendicant monsters without arms or legs, who went ramping through the mud on their bellies, from one underground wine-shop to another ; and blue-chinned priests and bare-footed brown monks and demure Sisters of Charity,<sup>30</sup> and here and there a jolly chiffonnier with his hook, and his knap-basket behind ; or a cuirassier, or a

gigantic carbineer, or gay little "Hunter of Africa," or a couple of bold gendarmes riding abreast, with their towering black *bonnets à poil*; or a pair of pathetic little red-legged soldiers, conscripts just fresh from the country, with innocent light eyes and straw-colored hair and freckled brown faces, walking hand in hand, and staring at all the pork-butchers' shops—and sometimes at the pork-butcher's wife !

Then a proletarian wedding procession—headed by the bride and bridegroom, an ungainly pair in their Sunday best—all singing noisily together. Then a pauper funeral, or a covered stretcher, followed by sympathetic eyes, on its way to the Hôtel-Dieu ; or the last sacrament, with bell and candle, bound for the bedside of some humble agonizer *in extremis*—and we all uncovered as it went by.

And then, for a running accompaniment of sound, the clanging chimes, the itinerant street criers, the tinkle of the *marchand de coco*, the drum, the *cor de chasse*, the organ of Barbary, the ubiquitous pet parrot, the knife-grinder, the bawling fried-potato monger, and, most amusing of all, the poodle-clipper and his son, strophe and antistrophe, for every minute the little boy would yell out in his shrill treble that "his father clipped poodles for thirty sous, and was competent also to undertake the management of refractory tomcats," upon which the father would growl in his solemn bass, "My son speaks the truth"—*L'enfant dit vrai !*

And rising above the general cacophony the din of the eternally cracking whip, of the heavy cart-wheel jolting over the uneven stones, the stamp and neigh

of the spirited little French cart-horse and the music of his many bells, and the cursing and swearing and *hue! dià!* of his driver ! It was all entrancing.

Thence home—to quiet, innocent, suburban Passy—by the quays, walking on the top of the stone parapet 5 all the way, so as to miss nothing (till a gendarme was in sight), or else by the boulevards, the Rue de Rivoli, the Champs Elysées, the Avenue de St. Cloud, and the Chaussée de la Muette. What a beautiful walk ! Is there another like it anywhere as it was 10 then, in the sweet early forties of this worn-out old century, and before this poor scribe had reached his teens ?

Ah ! it is something to have known that Paris, which lay at one's feet as one gazed from the heights 15 of Passy, with all its pinnacles and spires and gorgeously-gilded domes, its Arch of Triumph, its Elysian Fields, its Field of Mars, its Towers of our Lady, its far-off Column of July, its Invalids, and Vale of Grace, and Magdalen, and Place of the 20 Concord, where the obelisk reared its exotic peak by the beautiful unforgettable fountains.

There flowed the many-bridged winding river, always the same way, unlike our tidal Thames, and always full ; just beyond it was spread that stately, 25 exclusive suburb, the despair of the newly rich and recently ennobled, where almost every other house bore a name which read like a page of French history ; and farther still the merry, wicked Latin quarter and the grave Sorbonne, the Pantheon, the Garden of 30 Plants ; on the hither side in the middle distance, the

Louvre, where the kings of France had dwelt for centuries ; the Tuileries, where "the King of the French" dwelt then, and just for a little while yet.

Well I knew and loved it all ; and most of all I loved it when the sun was setting at my back, and innumerable distant windows reflected the blood-red western flame. It seemed as though half Paris were on fire, with the cold blue east for a background.

Dear Paris !

- 10 Yes, it is something to have roamed over it as a small boy—a small English boy (that is, a small boy unattended by his mother or his nurse), curious, inquisitive, and indefatigable ; full of imagination ; all his senses keen with the keenness that belongs to  
 15 the morning of life : the sight of a hawk, the hearing of a bat, almost the scent of a hound.

Indeed, it required a nose both subtle and unprejudiced to understand and appreciate and thoroughly enjoy that Paris—not Paris of M. le Baron Haussmann, lighted by gas and electricity, and flushed and drained by modern science ; but the "good old Paris" of Balzac and Eugène Sue and *Les Mystères*—the Paris of dim oil-lanterns suspended from iron gibbets (where once aristocrats had been hung) ; of  
 25 water-carriers who sold water from their hand-carts, and delivered it at your door (*au cinquième*) for a penny a pail—to drink of, and wash in, and cook with, and all.

There were whole streets—and these by no means the least fascinating and romantic—where the un-  
 30 written domestic records of every house were afloat in the air outside it—records not all savory or sweet, but always full of interest and charm !

One knew at a sniff as one passed the *porte cochère* what kind of people lived behind and above ; what they ate and what they drank, and what their trade was ; whether they did their washing at home, and burned tallow or wax, and mixed chicory with their coffee, and were over-fond of Gruyère cheese—the biggest, cheapest, plainest, and most formidable cheese in the world ; whether they fried with oil or butter, and liked their omelets overdone and garlic in their salad, and sipped black-currant brandy or anisette as a liqueur ; and were overrun with mice, and used cats or mouse-traps to get rid of them, or neither ; and bought violets, or pinks, or gillyflowers in season, and kept them too long ; and fasted on Friday with red or white beans, or lentils, or had a dispensation from the Pope—or, haply, even dispensed with the Pope's dispensation.

For of such a telltale kind were the overtones in that complex, odorous clang.

I will not define its fundamental note—ever there, ever the same ; big with a warning of quick-coming woe to many households ; whose unheeded waves, slow but sure, and ominous as those that rolled on great occasions from le Bourdon de Notre Dame (the Big Ben of Paris), drove all over the gay city and beyond, night and day—penetrating every corner, overflowing the most secret recesses, drowning the very incense by the altar-steps.

“ Le pauvre en sa cabane où le chaume le couvre  
Est sujet à ses lois ;  
Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre  
N'en défend point nos rois.”

And here, as I write, the faint, scarcely perceptible, ghost-like suspicion of a scent—a mere nostalgic fancy, compound, generic, synthetic and all-embracing—an abstract olfactory symbol of the “Tout Paris” of fifty years ago, comes back to me out of the past ; and fain would I inhale it in all its pristine fulness and vigor. For scents, like musical sounds, are rare sublimators of the essence of memory (this is a prodigious fine phrase—I hope it means something), and scents need not be seductive in themselves to recall the seductions of scenes and days gone by.

Alas ! scents cannot be revived at will, like an

“ Air doux et tendre  
Jadis aimé ! ”

15 Oh, that I could hum or whistle an old French smell ! I could wake all Paris, sweet, præ-imperial Paris, in a single whiff !

## IV.

### **Bees.**

JOHN BURROUGHS.

From *An Idyl of the Honey-Bee*.<sup>1</sup> This selection is essentially of the same kind as the preceding, but involves some exposition. It may stand as typical of the large body of outdoor sketches that owe their force mainly to the keenness of the author's observation. It should be used to stimulate the observation of the pupil, but also to induce a higher precision and aptness in recording the results of that observation.

The keenness of Burroughs's observation, and the force and aptness of his figures, contrast sharply with the weakness of his occasional conventionalities in diction and looseness in sentences. It will be profitable for the student to distinguish the excellent parts of his description from the parts where he lapses.

Parallels will be found in the works of Richard Jefferies, Maurice Thompson, W. Hamilton Gibson, Frank Bolles, Bradford Torrey, and in the classic Natural History of Selborne (printed in Cassell's National Library, 2 vols., paper).

THERE is no creature with which man has surrounded himself that seems so much like a product of civilization, so much like the result of development on special lines and in special fields, as the honey-bee. Indeed, a colony of bees, with their neatness and love of order, 5 their division of labor, their public spiritedness, their

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<sup>1</sup> Printed by kind permission of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Company, from *Birds and Bees* (Riverside Literature Series, No. 28, paper, fifteen cents).

thrift, their complex economies and their inordinate love of gain, seems as far removed from a condition of rude nature as does a walled city or a cathedral town. Our native bee, on the other hand, "the burly, dozing bumble-bee," affects one more like the rude, untutored savage. He has learned nothing from experience. He lives from hand to mouth. He luxuriates in time of plenty, and he starves in times of scarcity. He lives in a rude nest or in a hole in the ground, and in small communities ; he builds a few deep cells or sacks in which he stores a little honey and bee-bread for his young, but as a worker in wax he is of the most primitive and awkward. The Indian regarded the honey-bee as an ill-omen. She was the white man's fly. In fact she was the epitome of the white man himself. She has the white man's craftiness, his industry, his architectural skill, his neatness and love of system, his foresight ; and above all, his eager, miserly habits. The honey-bee's great ambition is to be rich, to lay up great stores, to possess the sweet of every flower that blooms. She is more than provident. Enough will not satisfy her ; she must have all she can get by hook or by crook. She comes from the oldest country, Asia, and thrives best in the most fertile and long-settled lands.

Yet the fact remains that the honey-bee is essentially a wild creature, and never has been and cannot be thoroughly domesticated. Its proper home is the woods, and thither every new swarm counts on going ; and thither many do go in spite of the care and watchfulness of the bee-keeper. If the woods in any given locality are deficient in trees with suitable cavities, the bees resort to all sorts of makeshifts ; they go into

chimneys, into barns and outhouses, under stones, into rocks, and so forth. Several chimneys in my locality with disused flues are taken possession of by colonies of bees nearly every season. One day, while bee-hunting, I developed a line that went toward a farm-house where I had reason to believe no bees were kept. 5 I followed it up and questioned the farmer about his bees. He said he kept no bees, but that a swarm had taken possession of his chimney, and another had gone under the clapboards in the gable end of his house. 10 He had taken a large lot of honey out of both places the year before. Another farmer told me that one day his family had seen a number of bees examining a knot-hole in the side of his house; the next day as they were sitting down to dinner their attention was 15 attracted by a loud humming noise, when they discovered a swarm of bees settling upon the side of the house and pouring into the knot-hole. In subsequent years other swarms came to the same place.

Apparently, every swarm of bees before it leaves 20 the parent hive sends out exploring parties to look up the future home. The woods and groves are searched through and through, and no doubt the privacy of many a squirrel and many a wood mouse is intruded upon. What cozy nooks and retreats they do spy 25 out, so much more attractive than the painted hive in the garden, so much cooler in summer and so much warmer in winter!

The bee is in the main an honest citizen; she prefers legitimate to illegitimate business; she is 30 never an outlaw until her proper sources of supply fail; she will not touch honey as long as honey-yield-

ing flowers can be found ; she always prefers to go to the fountain-head, and dislikes to take her sweets at second hand. But in the fall, after the flowers have failed, she can be tempted. The bee-hunter takes advantage of this fact ; he betrays her with a little honey. He wants to steal her stores, and he first encourages her to steal his, then follows the thief home with her booty. This is the whole trick of the bee-hunter. The bees never suspect his game, else by taking a circuitous route they could easily baffle him.

But the honey-bee has absolutely no wit or cunning outside of her special gifts as a gatherer and storer of honey. She is a simple-minded creature, and can be imposed upon by any novice. Yet it is not every novice that can find a bee-tree. The sportsman may track his game to its retreat by the aid of his dog, but in hunting the honey-bee one must be his own dog, and track his game through an element in which it leaves no trail. It is a task for a sharp, quick eye, and may test the resources of the best wood-craft.

One autumn, when I devoted much time to this pursuit, as the best means of getting at nature and the open-air exhilaration, my eye became so trained that bees were nearly as easy to it as birds. I saw and heard bees wherever I went. One day, standing on a street corner in a great city, I saw above the trucks and the traffic a line of bees carrying off sweets from some grocery or confectionery shop.

One looks upon the woods with a new interest when he suspects they hold a colony of bees. What a pleasing secret it is ; a tree with a heart of comb-honey, a decayed oak or maple with a bit of Sicily or Mount

Hymettus stowed away in its trunk or branches; secret chambers where lies hidden the wealth of ten thousand little freebooters, great nuggets and wedges of precious ore gathered with risk and labor from every field and wood about.

5

But if you would know the delights of bee-hunting, and how many sweets such a trip yields besides honey, come with me some bright, warm, late September or early October day. It is the golden season of the year, and any errand or pursuit that takes us abroad upon the hills or by the painted woods and along the amber-colored streams at such a time is enough. So, with haversacks filled with grapes and peaches and apples and a bottle of milk—for we shall not be home to dinner—and armed with a compass, a hatchet, a pail, and a box with a piece of comb-honey neatly fitted into it—any box the size of your hand with a lid will do nearly as well as the elaborate and ingenious contrivance of the regular bee-hunter—we sally forth. Our course at first lies along the highway, under great chestnut-trees whose nuts are just dropping, then through an orchard and across a little creek, thence gently rising through a long series of cultivated fields toward some high, uplying land, behind which rises a rugged wooded ridge or mountain, the most sightly point in all this section. Behind this ridge for several miles the country is wild, wooded, and rocky, and is no doubt the home of many wild swarms of bees. What a gleeful uproar the robins, cedar-birds, high-holes, and cow black-birds make amid the black cherry-trees as we pass along. The raccoons, too, have been here after black cherries, and

we see their marks at various points. Several crows are walking about a newly-sowed wheat field we pass through, and we pause to note their graceful movements and glossy coats. I have seen no bird walk 5 the ground with just the same air the crow does. It is not exactly pride ; there is no strut or swagger in it, though, perhaps, just a little condescension ; it is the contented, complaisant, and self-possessed gait of a lord over his domains. All these acres are mine, he 10 says, and all these crops ; men plow and sow for me, and I stay here or go there, and find life sweet and good wherever I am. The hawk looks awkward and out of place on the ground ; the game birds hurry and skulk, but the crow is at home and treads the 15 earth as if there were none to molest or make him afraid.

The crows we have always with us, but it is not every day or every season that one sees an eagle. Hence I must preserve the memory of one I saw the 20 last day I went bee-hunting. As I was laboring up the side of a mountain at the head of a valley, the noble bird sprang from the top of a dry tree above me and came sailing directly over my head. I saw him bend his eye down upon me, and I could hear 25 the low hum of his plumage, as if the web of every quill in his great wings vibrated in his strong, level flight. I watched him as long as my eye could hold him. When he was fairly clear of the mountain he began that sweeping spiral movement in which he 30 climbs the sky. Up and up he went without once breaking his majestic poise till he appeared to sight some far-off alien geography, when he bent his course

thitherward, and gradually vanished in the blue depths. The eagle is a bird of large ideas, he embraces long distances; the continent is his home. I never look upon one without emotion; I follow him with my eye as long as I can. I think of Canada, of the Great Lakes, of the Rocky Mountains, of the wild and sounding seacoast. The waters are his, and the woods and the inaccessible cliffs. He pierces behind the veil of the storm, and his joy is height and depth and vast spaces. 10

We go out of our way to touch at a spring run in the edge of the woods, and are lucky to find a single scarlet lobelia lingering there. It seems almost to light up the gloom with its intense bit of color. Beside a ditch in a field beyond we find the great blue lobelia (*Lobelia syphilitica*), and near it amid the weeds and wild grasses and purple asters the most beautiful of our fall flowers, the fringed gentian. What a rare and delicate, almost aristocratic look the gentian has amid its coarse, unkempt surroundings. It does not lure the bee, but it lures and holds every passing human eye. If we strike through the corner of yonder woods, where the ground is moistened by hidden springs, and where there is a little opening amid the trees, we shall find the closed gentian, a rare flower in this locality. I had walked this way many times before I chanced upon its retreat; and then I was following a line of bees. I lost the bees, but I got the gentians. How curiously this flower looks, with its deep blue petals folded together so tightly—a bud and yet a blossom. It is the nun among our wild flowers, a form closely veiled and cloaked. The 20  
25  
30

buccaneer bumble-bee sometimes tries to rifle it of its sweets. I have seen the blossom with the bee entombed in it. He had forced his way into the virgin corolla as if determined to know its secret, but he had never returned with the knowledge he had gained.

After a refreshing walk of a couple of miles we reach a point where we will make our first trial—a high stone wall that runs parallel with the wooded ridge referred to, and separated from it by a broad field. There are bees at work there on that goldenrod, and it requires but little manœuvring to sweep one into our box. Almost any other creature rudely and suddenly arrested in its career and clapped into a cage in this way would show great confusion and alarm. The bee is alarmed for a moment, but the bee has a passion stronger than its love of life or fear of death, namely, desire for honey, not simply to eat, but to carry home as booty. "Such rage of honey in their bosom beats," says Virgil. It is quick to catch the scent of honey in the box, and as quick to fall to filling itself. We now set the box down upon the wall and gently remove the cover. The bee is head and shoulders in one of the half-filled cells, and is oblivious to everything else about it. Come rack, come ruin, it will die at work. We step back a few paces, and sit down upon the ground, so as to bring the box against the blue sky as a background. In two or three minutes the bee is seen rising slowly and heavily from the box. It seems loath to leave so much honey behind and it marks the place well. It mounts aloft in a rapidly increasing spiral, surveying the near and minute objects first, then the larger and

more distant, till having circled about the spot five or six times and taken all its bearings it darts away for home. It is a good eye that holds fast to the bee till it is fairly off. Sometimes one's head will swim following it, and often one's eyes are put out by the sun. This bee gradually drifts down the hill, then strikes away toward a farm-house half a mile away, where I know bees are kept. Then we try another and another, and the third bee, much to our satisfaction, goes straight toward the woods. We could see the brown speck against the darker background for many yards. The regular bee-hunter professes to be able to tell a wild bee from a tame one by the color, the former, he says, being lighter. But there is no difference; they are both alike in color and in manner. Young bees are lighter than old, and that is all there is of it. If a bee lived many years in the woods it would doubtless come to have some distinguishing marks, but the life of a bee is only a few months at the farthest, and no change is wrought in this brief time.

Our bees are all soon back, and more with them, for we have touched the box here and there with the cork of a bottle of anise oil, and this fragrant and pungent oil will attract bees half a mile or more. When no flowers can be found, this is the quickest way to obtain a bee.

It is a singular fact that when the bee first finds the hunter's box its first feeling is one of anger; it is as mad as a hornet; its tone changes, it sounds its shrill war trumpet and darts to and fro, and gives vent to its rage and indignation in no uncertain man-

ner. It seems to scent foul play at once. It says, "Here is robbery ; here is the spoil of some hive, may be my own," and its blood is up. But its ruling passion soon comes to the surface, its avarice gets  
5 the better of its indignation, and it seems to say, "Well, I had better take possession of this and carry it home." So after many feints and approaches and dartings off with a loud angry hum as if it would none of it, the bee settles down and fills itself.

10 It does not entirely cool off and get soberly to work till it has made two or three trips home with its booty. When other bees come, even if all from the same swarm, they quarrel and dispute over the box, and clip and dart at each other like bantam  
15 cocks. Apparently the ill feeling which the sight of the honey awakens is not one of jealousy or rivalry, but wrath.

When a bee-tree is thus "taken up" in the middle of the day, of course a good many bees are away from  
20 home and have not heard the news. When they return and find the ground flowing with honey, and piles of bleeding combs lying about, they apparently do not recognize the place, and their first instinct is to fall to and fill themselves ; this done, their next  
25 thought is to carry it home, so they rise up slowly through the branches of the trees till they have attained an altitude that enables them to survey the scene, when they seem to say, "Why, *this* is home," and down they come again ; beholding the wreck and  
30 ruins once more they still think there is some mistake, and get up a second or third time and then drop back

pitifully as before. It is the most pathetic sight of all, the surviving and bewildered bees struggling to save a few drops of their wasted treasures.

Presently, if there is another swarm in the woods, robber-bees appear. You may know them by their saucy, chiding, devil-may-care hum. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and they make the most of the misfortune of their neighbors; and thereby pave the way for their own ruin. The hunter marks their course and the next day looks them up. On this occasion the day was hot and the honey very fragrant, and a line of bees was soon established S. S. W. Though there was much refuse honey in the old stub, and though little golden rills trickled down the hill from it, and the near branches and saplings were smeared with it where we wiped our murderous hands, yet not a drop was wasted. It was a feast to which not only honey-bees came, but bumble-bees, wasps, hornets, flies, ants. The bumble-bees, which at this season are hungry vagrants with no fixed place of abode, would gorge themselves, then creep beneath the bits of empty comb or fragments of bark and pass the night, and renew the feast next day. The bumble-bee is an insect of which the bee-hunter sees much. There are all sorts and sizes of them. They are dull and clumsy compared with the honey-bee. Attracted in the fields by the bee-hunter's box, they will come up the wind on the scent and blunder into it in the most stupid, lubberly fashion.

The honey-bees that licked up our leavings on the old stub belonged to a swarm, as it proved, about half a mile farther down the ridge, and a few days after-

ward fate overtook them, and their stores in turn became the prey of another swarm in the vicinity, which also tempted Providence and were overwhelmed. The first mentioned swarm I had lined from several 5 points, and was following up the clew over rocks and through gulleys, when I came to where a large hemlock had been felled a few years before and a swarm taken from a cavity near the top of it ; fragments of the old comb were yet to be seen.. A few yards away 10 stood another short, squatly hemlock, and I said my bees ought to be there. As I paused near it I noticed where the tree had been wounded with an ax a couple of feet from the ground many years before. The wound had partially grown over, but there was an 15 opening there that I did not see at the first glance. I was about to pass on when a bee passed me making that peculiar shrill, discordant hum that a bee makes when besmeared with honey. I saw it alight in the partially closed wound and crawl home ; then came 20 others and others, little bands and squads of them heavily freighted with honey from the box. The tree was about twenty inches through and hollow at the butt, or from the ax mark down. This space the bees had completely filled with honey. With an ax we cut 25 away the outer ring of live wood and exposed the treasure. Despite the utmost care, we wounded the comb so that little rills of the golden liquid issued from the root of the tree and trickled down the hill.

The other bee-tree in the vicinity, to which I have 30 referred, we found one warm November day in less than half an hour after entering the woods. It also was a hemlock, that stood in a niche in a wall of

hoary, moss-covered rocks thirty feet high. The tree hardly reached to the top of the precipice. The bees entered a small hole at the root, which was seven or eight feet from the ground. The position was a striking one. Never did apiary have a finer outlook or 5 more rugged surroundings. A black, wood-embraced lake lay at our feet ; the long panorama of the Catskills filled the far distance, and the more broken outlines of the Shawangunk range filled the rear. On every hand were precipices and a wild confusion of 10 rocks and trees.

The cavity occupied by the bees was about three feet and a half long and eight or ten inches in diameter. With an ax we cut away one side of the tree and laid bare its curiously wrought heart of honey. It 15 was a most pleasing sight. What winding and devious ways the bees had through their palace ! What great masses and blocks of snow-white comb there were ! Where it was sealed up, presenting that slightly dented, uneven surface, it looked like some 20 precious ore. When we carried a large pail full of it out of the woods, it seemed still more like ore.

## V.

### The Parish of Selborne.

GILBERT WHITE.

From the *Natural History of Selborne* (i). This selection is an instance of enumerative description, with simple grouping of details (p. xxi). The purpose is expository, the diction remarkable for its precision and simplicity.

THE parish of Selborne lies in the extreme eastern corner of the county of Hampshire, bordering on the county of Sussex, and not far from the county of Surrey; is about fifty miles southwest of London, in latitude fifty-one, and near midway between the towns of Alton and Petersfield. Being very large and extensive, it abuts on twelve parishes, two of which are in Sussex, viz., Trotton and Rogate. If you begin from the south and proceed westward, the adjacent parishes are Emshot, Newton Valence, Faringdon, Hartely-Mauduit, Great Wardleham, Kingsley, Hedeleigh, Bramshot, Trotton, Rogate, Lysse, and Great-ham. The soils of this district are almost as various and diversified as the views and aspects. The high part of the southwest consists of a vast hill of chalk, rising three hundred feet above the village, and is divided into a sheep-down, the high wood, and a long hanging wood called The Hanger. The covert of this eminence is altogether beech, the most lovely of

all forest trees, whether we consider its smooth rind or bark, its glossy foliage, or graceful pendulous boughs. The down, or sheep-walk, is a pleasant, park-like spot, of about one mile by half that space, jutting out on the verge of the hill-country, where it begins to 5 break down into the plains, and commanding a very engaging view, being an assemblage of hill, dale, woodlands, heath, and water. The prospect is bounded to the southeast and east by the vast range of mountains called the Sussex downs, by Guild-down near Guild-<sup>10</sup> ford, and by the downs round Dorking, and Ryegate in Surrey, to the northeast, which altogether, with the country beyond Alton and Farnham, form a noble and extensive outline.

At the foot of this hill, one stage or step from the 15 uplands, lies the village, which consists of one single straggling street, three-quarters of a mile in length, in a sheltered vale, and running parallel with the Hanger. The houses are divided from the hill by a vein of stiff clay (good wheat land), yet stand on a rock of white 20 stone, little in appearance removed from chalk; but seems so far from being calcareous, that it endures extreme heat. Yet that the freestone still preserves somewhat that is analogous to chalk, is plain from the beeches, which descend as low as those rocks extend, 25 and no farther, and thrive as well on them, where the ground is steep, as on the chalks.

The cart-way of the village divides, in a remarkable manner, two very incongruous soils. To the southwest is a rank clay, that requires the labour of years 30 to render it mellow; while the gardens to the northeast, and small enclosures behind, consist of a warm,

forward, crumbling mould, called black malm, which seems highly saturated with vegetable and animal manure : and these may perhaps have been the original site of the town ; while the woods and coverts 5 might extend down to the opposite bank.

At each end of the village, which runs from south-east to northwest, arises a small rivulet : that at the northwest end frequently fails ; but the other is a fine perennial spring, little influenced by drought or wet 10 seasons, called Well-head. This breaks out of some high grounds joining to Nore Hill, a noble chalk promontory, remarkable for sending forth two streams into two different seas. The one to the south becomes a branch of the Arun, running to Arundel, and so sailing 15 into the British Channel : the other to the north.

The Selborne stream makes one branch of the Wey ; and, meeting the Black-down stream at Hedleigh, and the Alton and Farnham stream at Tilford-bridge, swells into a considerable river, navigable at Godal-20 ming ; from whence it passes to Guildford, and so into the Thames at Weybridge ; and thus at the Nore into the German Ocean.

Our wells, at an average, run to about sixty-three feet, and when sunk to that depth seldom fail ; but 25 produce a fine limpid water, soft to the taste, and much commended by those who drink the pure element, but which does not lather well with soap.

To the northwest, north and east of the village, is a range of fair enclosures, consisting of what is called a 30 white malm, a sort of rotten or rubble stone, which when turned up to the frost and rain, moulders to pieces, and becomes manure to itself.

Still on to the northeast, and a step lower, is a kind of white land, neither chalk nor clay, neither fit for pasture nor for the plough, yet kindly for hops, which root deep into the freestone, and have their poles and wood for charcoal growing just at hand. The white 5 soil produces the brightest hops.

As the parish still inclines down towards Wolmer Forest, at the juncture of the clays and sand the soil becomes a wet, sandy loam, remarkable for timber, and infamous for roads. The oaks of Temple and 10 Blackmoor stand high in the estimation of purveyors, and have furnished much naval timber ; while the trees on the freestone grow large, but are what workmen call shaky, and so brittle as often to fall to pieces in sawing. Beyond the sandy loam the soil becomes a hungry, 15 lean sand, till it mingles with the forest ; and will produce little without the assistance of lime and turnips.

## VI.

### Byzantium.

EDWARD GIBBON.

From the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (cap. xvii). This is a more formal and elaborate example of the kind of description seen in Selection V. Note the carefulness of the plan (p. xxiii), the principle followed in the selection of details, the conciseness inherent in the precision of the epithets.

If we survey Byzantium in the extent which it acquired with the august name of Constantinople, the figure of the Imperial city may be represented under that of an unequal triangle. The obtuse point, which advances towards the East and the shores of Asia, meets and repels the waves of the Thracian Bosphorus. The northern side of the city is bounded by the harbour, and the southern is washed by the Propontis or Sea of Marmora. The basis of the triangle is opposed to the West, and terminates the continent of Europe. But the admirable form and division of the circumjacent land and water cannot, without a more ample explanation, be clearly or sufficiently understood.

The winding channel through which the waters of the Euxine flow with a rapid and incessant course towards the Mediterranean received the appellation of Bosphorus, a name not less celebrated in the history than in the fables of antiquity. A crowd of temples

and of votive altars, profusely scattered along its steep and woody banks, attested the unskilfulness, the terrors, and the devotion of the Grecian navigators who, after the example of the Argonauts, explored the dangers of the inhospitable Euxine. On these banks 5 tradition long preserved the memory of the palace of Phineus, infested by the obscene harpies ; and of the sylvan reigl. of Amycus, who defied the son of Leda to the combat of the Cestus. The straits of the Bosphorus are terminated by the Cyanean rocks, which, 10 according to the description of the poets, had once floated on the face of the waters, and were destined by the gods to protect the entrance of the Euxine against the eye of profane curiosity. From the Cyanean rocks to the point and harbour of Byzantium 15 the winding length of the Bosphorus extends about sixteen miles, and its most ordinary breadth may be computed at about one mile and a half. The new castles of Europe and Asia are constructed, on either continent, upon the foundations of two celebrated 20 temples, of Serapis and of Jupiter Urius. The old castles, a work of the Greek emperors, command the narrowest part of the channel, in a place where the opposite banks advance within five hundred paces of each other. These fortresses were restored and 25 strengthened by Mahomet the Second when he meditated the seige of Constantinople : but the Turkish conqueror was most probably ignorant that, near two thousand years before his reign, Darius had chosen the same situation to connect the two continents by a 30 bridge of boats. At a small distance from the old castles we discover the little town of Chrysopolis, or

Scutari, which may almost be considered as the Asiatic suburb of Constantinople. The Bosphorus, as it begins to open into the Propontis, passes between Byzantium and Chalcedon. The latter of these cities was built by the Greeks a few years before the former ; and the blindness of its founders, who overlooked the superior advantages of the opposite coast, has been stigmatized by a proverbial expression of contempt.

The harbour of Constantinople, which may be considered as an arm of the Bosphorus, obtained, in a very remote period, the denomination of the *Golden Horn*. The curve which it describes might be compared to the horn of a stag, or as it should seem, with more propriety, to that of an ox. The epithet of *golden* was expressive of the riches which every wind wafted from the most distant countries into the secure and capacious port of Constantinople. The river Lycus, formed by the conflux of two little streams, pours into the harbour a perpetual supply of fresh water, which serves to cleanse the bottom and to invite the periodical shoals of fish to seek their retreat in that convenient recess. As the vicissitudes of tides are scarcely felt in those seas, the constant depth of the harbour allows goods to be landed on the quays without the assistance of boats ; and it has been observed that, in many places, the largest vessels may rest their prows against the houses while their sterns are floating in the water. From the mouth of the Lycus to that of the harbour this arm of the Bosphorus is more than seven miles in length. The entrance is about five hundred yards broad, and a strong chain could be occasionally drawn across it to

guard the port and city from the attack of an hostile navy.

Between the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, the shores of Europe and Asia receding on either side enclose the Sea of Marmora, which was known to the ancients by the denomination of Propontis. The navigation from the issue of the Bosphorus to the entrance of the Hellespont is about one hundred and twenty miles. Those who steer their westward course through the middle of the Propontis may at once descry the high lands of Thrace and Bithynia, and never lose sight of the lofty summit of Mount Olympus, covered with eternal snows. They leave on the left a deep gulf, at the bottom of which Nicomedia was seated, the imperial residence of Diocletian; and they pass the small islands of Cyzicus and Proconnesus before they cast anchor at Gallipoli, where the sea, which separates Asia from Europe, is again contracted into a narrow channel.

The geographers who, with the most skilful accuracy, have surveyed the form and extent of the Hellespont, assign about sixty miles for the winding course, and about three miles for the ordinary breadth, of those celebrated straits. But the narrowest part of the channel is found to the northward of the old Turkish castles, between the cities of Sestus and Abydus. It was here that the adventurous Leander braved the passage of the flood for the possession of his mistress. It was here likewise, in a place where the distance between the opposite banks cannot exceed five hundred paces, that Xerxes imposed a stupendous bridge of boats, for the purpose of transporting into Europe

a hundred and seventy myriads of barbarians. A sea contracted within such narrow limits may seem but ill to deserve the singular epithet of *broad*, which Homer, as well as Orpheus, has frequently bestowed  
5 on the Hellespont. But our ideas of greatness are of a relative nature : the traveller, and especially the poet, who sailed along the Hellespont, who pursued the windings of the stream, and contemplated the rural scenery, which appeared on every side to terminate the prospect, insensibly lost the remembrance of the sea ; and his fancy painted those celebrated straits with all the attributes of a mighty river, flowing with a swift current, in the midst of a woody and inland country, and at length, through a wide mouth,  
15 discharging itself into the *Æ*gean or Archipelago.

Ancient Troy, seated on an eminence at the foot of Mount Ida, overlooked the mouth of the Hellespont, which scarcely received an accession of waters from the tribute of those immortal rivulets the Simois and  
20 Scamander. The Grecian camp had stretched twelve miles along the shore, from the Sigean to the Rhœtean promontory ; and the flanks of the army were guarded by the bravest chiefs who fought under the banners of Agamemnon. The first of those promontories was  
25 occupied by Achilles with his invincible myrmidons, and the dauntless Ajax pitched his tents on the other. After Ajax had fallen a sacrifice to his disappointed pride and to the ingratitude of the Greeks, his sepulchre was erected on the ground where he had defended  
30 the navy against the rage of Jove and of Hector ; and the citizens of the rising town of Rhœteum celebrated his memory with divine honours. Before Constantine

gave a just preference to the situation of Byzantium, he had conceived the design of erecting the seat of empire on this celebrated spot, from whence the Romans derived their fabulous origin. The extensive plain which lies below ancient Troy, towards the Rhœtean promontory and the tomb of Ajax, was first chosen for his new capital ; and, though the undertaking was soon relinquished, the stately remains of unfinished walls and towers attracted the notice of all who sailed through the straits of the Hellespont. 10

We are at present qualified to view the advantageous position of Constantinople, which appears to have been formed by nature for the centre and capital of a great monarchy. Situated in the forty-first degree of latitude, the Imperial city commanded, from her seven 15 hills, the opposite shores of Europe and Asia ; the climate was healthy and temperate, the soil fertile, the harbour secure and capacious, and the approach on the side of the continent was of small extent and easy defence. The Bosphorus and the Hellespont may be 20 considered as the two gates of Constantinople, and the prince who possessed those important passages could always shut them against a naval enemy and open them to the fleets of commerce. The preservation of the eastern provinces may, in some degree, 25 be ascribed to the policy of Constantine, as the barbarians of the Euxine, who in the preceding age had poured their armaments into the heart of the Mediterranean, soon desisted from the exercise of piracy, and despaired of forcing this insurmountable barrier. 30 When the gates of the Hellespont and the Bosphorus were shut, the capital still enjoyed within their

spacious enclosure every production which could supply the wants or gratify the luxury of its numerous inhabitants. The sea-coasts of Thrace and Bithynia, which languish under the weight of Turkish oppression, still exhibit a rich prospect of vineyards, of gardens, and of plentiful harvests ; and the Propontis has ever been renowned for an inexhaustible store of the most exquisite fish, that are taken in their stated seasons, without skill, and almost without labour. But 10 when the passages of the straits were thrown open for trade, they alternately admitted the natural and artificial riches of the north and south, of the Euxine, and of the Mediterranean. Whatever rude commodities were collected in the forests of Germany and Scythia, 15 as far as the sources of the Tanais and the Borysthenes ; whatsoever was manufactured by the skill of Europe or Asia ; the corn of Egypt, and the gems and spices of the farthest India, were brought by the varying winds into the port of Constantinople, which, 20 for many ages, attracted the commerce of the ancient world.

## VII.

Geneva.<sup>1</sup>

JOHN RUSKIN.

From *Præterita* (§ v). Here also the method is enumeration with grouping and plan, but the aim is purely picturesque. Note that the free use of figures has the underlying force of precision.

A LITTLE canton, four miles square, and which did not wish to be six miles square ! A little town, composed of a cluster of watermills, a street of penthouses, two wooden bridges, two dozen of stone houses on a little hill, and three or four perpendicular lanes up and down the hill. The four miles of acreage round, in grass, with modest gardens, and farm-dwelling houses ; the people, pious, learned, and busy, to a man, to a woman—to a boy, to a girl, of them ; progressing to and fro mostly on their feet, and only where they had no business. And this bird's-nest of a place, to be the centre of religious and social thought, and of physical beauty, to all living Europe ! That is to say, thinking and designing Europe,—France, Germany, and Italy. They, and their pieties, and their prides, their arts and their insanities, their wraths and slaughters, springing and flowering, building and fortifying, foaming and thundering round this inconceivable point of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. The selection at the bottom of p. xx.

patience : the most lovely spot, and the most notable, without any possible dispute, of the European universe ; yet the nations do not covet it, do not gravitate to it,—what is more wonderful, do not make a wilderness of it. They fight their battles at Chalons and Leipsic ; they build their cotton mills on the Aire, and leave the Rhone running with a million of Aire power,—all pure. They build their pleasure houses on Thames shingle and Seine mud, to look across to Lambeth, and—whatever *is* on the other side of the Seine.

They found their military powers in the sand of Berlin, and leave this precipice-guarded plain in peace. And yet it rules them,—is the focus of thought to them, and of passion, of science, and of *contrat sociale* ; of rational conduct, and of decent—and other—manners. Saussure's school and Calvin's,—Rousseau's and Byron's,—Turner's,—

And of course, I was going to say, mine ; but I didn't write all that last page to end so. Yet Geneva had better have ended with educating me and the likes of me, instead of the people who have hold of it now, with their polypous knots of houses, communal with 'London, Paris, and New York.'

Beneath which, and on the esplanades of the modern casino, New York and London now live—no more the Genevese. What their home once was, I must try to tell, as I saw it.

First, it was a notable town for keeping all its poor,—inside of it. In the very centre, where an English town has its biggest square, and its Exchange on the model of the Parthenon, built for the sake of the builder's commission on the cost ; there, on their little

pile-propped island, and by the steep lane-sides, lived the Genevoise poor ; in their garrets,—their laborious upper spinning or watch-wheel cutting rooms,—their dark niches and angles of lane : mostly busy ; the infirm and old all seen to and cared for, their porringers 5 filled and their pallet-beds made, by household care.

But, outside the ramparts, no more poor. A sputter, perhaps, southward, along the Savoy road ; but in all the champaign round, no mean rows of cubic lodgings with Doric porches ; no squalid fields 10 of mud and thistles ; no deserts of abandoned brick-field and insolvent kitchen garden. On the instant, outside Geneva gates, perfectly smooth, clean, trim-hedged or prim-walled country roads ; the main broad one intent on far-away things, its signal-posts inscribed 15 ‘Route de Paris’; branching from it, right and left, a labyrinth of equally well-kept ways for fine carriage wheels, between the gentlemen’s houses with their farms ; each having its own fifteen to twenty to fifty acres of mostly meadow, rich-waving always (in my 20 time for being there) with grass and flowers, like a kaleidoscope. Stately plane trees, aspen and walnut, —sometimes in avenue,—casting breezy, never gloomy shade round the dwelling-house. A dwelling-house indeed, all the year round ; no travelling from it to 25 fairer lands possible ; no shutting up for seasons in town ; hay-time and fruit-time, school-time and play, for generation after generation, within the cheerful white domicile with its green shutters and shingle roof,—pinnacled perhaps, humourously, at the corners, 30 glittering on the edges with silvery tin. ‘Kept up’ the whole place, and all the neighbours’ places, not ostent-

tatiouly, but perfectly : enough gardeners to mow, enough vintagers to press, enough nurses to nurse ; no foxes to hunt, no birds to shoot ; but every household felicity possible to prudence and honour, felt and 5 fulfilled from infancy to age.

Where the grounds came down to the waterside, they were mostly built out into it, till the water was four or five feet deep, lapping up, or lashing, under breeze, against the terrace wall. Not much boating ; fancy 10 wherries, unmanageable, or too adventurous, upon the wild blue ; and Swiss boating a serious market and trade business, unfashionable in the high rural empyrean of Geneva. But between the Hôtel des Etrangers (one of these country houses open to the 15 polite stranger, some half-mile out of the gates, where Salvador took us in '33 and '35) and the town, there were one or two landing-places for the raft-like flat feluccas ; and glimpses of the open lake and things beyond,—glimpses only, shut off quickly by garden 20 walls, until one came to the inlet of lake-water moat which bent itself under the ramparts back to the city gate. This was crossed, for people afoot who did not like going round to that main gate, by the delicatest of filiform suspension bridges ; strong enough it 25 looked to carry a couple of lovers over in safety, or a nursemaid and children, but nothing heavier. One was allowed to cross it for a centime, which seemed to me always a most profitable transaction, the portress receiving placidly a sort of dirty flattened sixpence, 30 (I forget its name), and returning me a waistcoat-pocketful of the loveliest little clean-struck centimes ; and then one might stand on the bridge any time, in

perfect quiet. (The Genevese didn't like paying the centime, and went round by the gate.) Two swans, drifting about underneath, over a couple of fathoms of purest green water, and the lake really opening from the moat, exactly where the Chamouni range of 5 aiguilles rose beyond it far away. In our town walks we used always to time getting back to the little bridge at sunset, there to wait and watch.

That was the way of things on the north side ; on the south, the town is still, in the main buildings of it, 10 as then ; the group of officially aristocratic houses round the cathedral and college presenting the same inaccessible sort of family dignity that they do to-day ; only, since then, the Geneva Liberals—Well, I will not say what they have done ; the main town stands still 15 on its height of pebble-gravel ; knit almost into rock ; and still the upper terraces look across the variously mischievous Liberal woods to the open southern country, rising in steady slope of garden, orchard, and vineyard—sprinkled with pretty farm-houses and bits 20 of chateau, like a sea-shore with shells ; rising always steeper and steeper, till the air gets rosy in the distance, then blue, and the great walnut-trees have become dots, and the farmsteads, minikin as if they were the fairy-finest of models made to be packed in a 25 box ; and then, instant—above vineyard, above farmstead, above field and wood, leaps up the Salève cliff, two thousand feet into the air.

I don't think anybody who goes to Geneva ever sees the Salève. For the most part, no English 30 creature ever *does* see farther than over the way ; and the Salève, unless you carefully peer into it, and make

out what it is, pretends to be nothing,—a long, low swell like the South Downs, I fancy most people take it for, and look no more. Yet there are few rocks in the high Alps more awful than the ‘Angle’ of the Salève, at its foot—seven Shakespeare’s Cliffs set one on the top of another, and all of marble.

On the other side of the high town the houses stand closer, leaving yet space for a little sycamore-shaded walk, whence one looks down on the whole southern reach of lake, opening wide to the horizon, and edged there like the sea, but in the summer sunshine looking as if it was the one well of blue which the sunbeams drank to make the sky of. Beyond it, ghostly ranges of incredible mountains—the Dent d’Oche, and first cliffs toward Fribourg ; to the west, the long wave of Jura, fading into the air above Neuchatel.

That was the view for full noon, when the lake was brightest and bluest. Then you fell down a perpendicular lane into the lower town again, and you went to Mr. Bautte’s.

Virtually there was no other jeweller in Geneva, in the great times. There were some respectable, uncompetitive shops, not dazzling, in the main street ; and smaller ones, with an average supply of miniature watches, that would go well for ten years ; and uncostly, but honest trinketry. But one went to Mr. Bautte’s with awe, and of necessity, as one did to one’s bankers. There was scarcely any external sign of Bautte whatever—a small brass plate at the side of a narrow arched door, into an alley—into a secluded alley—leading into a monastic courtyard, out of

which—or rather out of the alley, where it opened to the court, you ascended a winding stair, wide enough for two only, and came to a green door, swinging, at the top of it ; and there you paused to summon courage to enter.

5

A not large room, with a single counter at the further side. Nothing shown on the counter. Two confidential attendants behind it, and—it might possibly be Mr. Bautte !—or his son—or his partner—or anyhow the Ruling power—at his desk beside the back window. You told what you wanted : it was necessary to know your mind, and to be sure you *did* want it ; there was no showing of things for temptation at Bautte's. You wanted a bracelet, a brooch, a watch—plain or enamelled. Choice of what was wanted was 15 quietly given. There were no big stones, nor blinding galaxies of wealth. Entirely sound workmanship in the purest gold that could be worked ; fine enamel for the most part, for colour, rather than jewels ; and a certain Bauttessque subtlety of linked and wreathed 20 design, which the experienced eye recognized when worn in Paris or London. Absolutely just and moderate price ; wear,—to the end of your days. You came away with a sense of duty fulfilled, of treasure possessed, and of a new foundation to the 25 respectability of your family.

You returned into the light of the open street with a blissful sense of a parcel being made up to be sent after you, and in the consequently calm expatiation of mind, went usually to watch the Rhone.

30

Bautte's was in the main street, out of which one caught glimpses, down the short cross ones, of the

passing water, as at Sandgate, or the like fishing towns, one got peeps of the sea. With twenty steps you were beside it.

For all other rivers there is a surface, and an under-  
5 neath, and a vaguely displeasing idea of the bottom. But the Rhone flows like one lambent jewel ; its surface is nowhere, its ethereal self is everywhere, the iridescent rush and translucent strength of it blue to the shore, and radiant to the depth.

10 Fifteen feet thick, of not flowing, but flying water ; not water, neither—melted glacier, rather, one should call it ; the force of the ice is with it, and the wreathing of the clouds, the gladness of the sky, and the continuance of Time.

15 Waves of clear sea are, indeed, lovely to watch, but they are always coming or gone, never in any taken shape to be seen for a second. But here was one mighty wave that was always itself, and every fluted swirl of it, constant as the wreathing of a shell. No  
20 wasting away of the fallen foam, no pause for gathering of power, no helpless ebb of discouraged recoil ; but alike through bright day and lulling night, the never-pausing plunge, and never-fading flash, and never-hushing whisper, and, while the sun was up, the  
25 ever-answering glow of unearthly aquamarine, ultramarine, violet-blue, gentian-blue, peacock-blue, river-of-paradise blue, glass of a painted window melted in the sun, and the witch of the Alps flinging the spun tresses of it forever from her snow.

30 The innocent way, too, in which the river used to stop to look into every little corner. Great torrents always seem angry, and great rivers too often sullen ;

but there is no anger, no disdain, in the Rhone. It seemed as if the mountain stream was in mere bliss at recovering itself again out of the lake-sleep, and raced because it rejoiced in racing, fain yet to return and stay. There were pieces of wave that danced all day 5 as if Perdita were looking on to learn ; there were little streams that skipped like lambs and leaped like chamois ; there were pools that shook the sunshine all through them, and were rippled in layers of overlaid ripples, like crystal sand ; there were currents 10 that twisted the light into golden braids, and inlaid the threads with turquoise enamel ; there were strips of stream that had certainly above the lake been mill-streams, and were looking busily for mills to turn again ; there were shoots of stream that had once shot 15 fearfully into the air, and now sprang up again laughing that they had only fallen a foot or two ;—and in the midst of all the gay glittering and eddied lingering, the noble bearing by of the midmost depth, so mighty, yet so terrorless and harmless, with its swallows skim- 20 ming in spite of petrels, and the dear old decrepit town as safe in the embracing sweep of it as if it were set in a brooch of sapphire.

## VIII.

### The Storming of the Bastille.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

From *The French Revolution* (V, vi). This selection should be discussed to bring out the means of its vividness. The method is narrative enumeration, with constant suggestion of the look of the whole, often by effect (p. xl).

ALL morning, since nine, there has been a cry everywhere, To the Bastille ! Repeated “deputations of citizens” have been here, passionate for arms, whom De Launay has got dismissed by soft speeches through 5 port-holes. Toward noon, Elector Thuriot de la Rosière gains admittance, finds De Launay indisposed for surrender, nay, disposed for blowing up the place rather. Thuriot mounts with him to the battlements ; heaps of paving-stones, old iron, and missiles lie piled ; 10 cannon all duly levelled ; in every embrasure a cannon —only drawn back a little ! But outward, behold, O Thuriot, how the multitude flows on, welling through every street ; tocsin furiously pealing, all drums beating the *générale* ; the suburb Saint Antoine 15 rolling hitherward wholly, as one man ! Such vision (spectral, yet real) thou, O Thuriot, as from thy mount of visions, beholdest in this moment, prophetic of what other phantasmagories and loud-gibbering spectral

realities which thou yet beholdest not, but shalt ! "Que voulez-vous ?" said De Launay, turning pale at the sight, with an air of reproach, almost of menace. "Monsieur," said Thuriot, rising into the moral sublime, "what mean *you* ? Consider if I could not precipitate *both* of us from this height," say only a hundred feet, exclusive of the walled ditch ! Whereupon De Launay fell silent. Thuriot shows himself from some pinnacle, to comfort the multitude becoming suspicious, fumescent, then descends, departs with protest, with warning addressed also to the Invalides, on whom, however, it produces but a mixed, indistinct impression. The old heads are none of the clearest ; besides, it is said, De Launay has been profuse of beverages (*prodigue des boissons*). They think they will not fire—if not fired on—if they can help it ; but must, on the whole, be ruled considerably by circumstances.

Woe to thee, De Launay, in such an hour, if thou canst not, taking some one firm decision, rule circumstances ! Soft speeches will not serve, hard grape-shot is questionable, but hovering between the two is *unquestionable*. Ever wilder swells the tide of men, their infinite hum waxing ever louder, into imprecations, perhaps into crackle of stray musketry—which latter, on walls nine feet thick, cannot do execution. The outer drawbridge has been lowered for Thuriot ; new *deputation of citizens* (it is the third and noisest of all) penetrates that way into the outer court ; soft speeches producing no clearance of these, De Launay gives fire, pulls up his drawbridge. A slight splutter, which has *kindled* the too combustible chaos, made it

a roaring fire-chaos ! Bursts forth insurrection, at sight of its own blood (for there were deaths by that splutter of fire), into endless, rolling explosion of musketry, distraction, execration, and overhead, from the 5 fortress, let one great gun, with its grape-shot, go booming, to show what we *could* do. The Bastille is besieged!

On, then, all Frenchmen that have hearts in your bodies ! Roar with all your throats of cartilage and metal, ye sons of liberty ; stir spasmodically whatso-ever of utmost faculty is in you, soul, body, or spirit, for it is the hour ! Smite thou, Louis Tournay, cartwright of the Marais, old soldier of the Regiment Dauphiné ; smite at that outer drawbridge chain, though the fiery hail whistles round thee ! Never, 15 over nave or felloe, did thy axe strike such a stroke.

Down with it, man ; down with it to Orcus ; let the whole accursed edifice sink thither, and tyranny be swallowed up forever ! Mounted, some say, on the roof of the guard-room, some "on bayonets stuck into 20 joints of the wall," Louis Tournay smites, brave Aubin Bonnemère (also an old soldier) seconding him. The chain yields, breaks ; the huge drawbridge slams down, thundering (*avec fracas*). Glorious ! and yet, alas ! it is still but the outworks. The eight grim towers, 25 with their Invalides musketry, their paving-stones and cannon-mouths, will soar aloft intact ; ditch yawning impassable, stone-faced ; the inner drawbridge with its back toward us ; the Bastille is still to take !

To describe this siege of the Bastille (thought to be 30 one of the most important in history) perhaps transcends the talent of mortals. Could one but, after infinite reading, get to understand so much as the plan

of the building ! But there is open esplanade at the end<sup>o</sup> of the Rue Saint Antoine ; there are such fore-courts (*cour avancé*), *cour de l'orme*, arched gateway (where Louis Tournay now fights); then new draw-bridges, dormant-bridges, rampart-bastions, and the 5 grim eight towers, a labyrinthic mass, high-frowning there, of all ages from twenty years to four hundred and twenty, beleaguered in this its last hour, as we said, by mere chaos come again ! Ordnance of all calibres, throats of all capacities, men of all plans, 10 every man his own engineer ; seldom since the war of pygmies and cranes was there seen so anomalous a thing. Half-pay Elie is home for a suit of regiments, no one would heed him in coloured clothes ; half-pay Hulin is haranguing Gardes Françaises in the 15 Place de Grève. Frantic patriots pick up the grape-shots, bear them, still hot (or seemingly so), to the Hôtel de Ville. Paris, you perceive, is to be burnt ! Flesselles is "pale to the very lips," for the roar of the multitude grows deep. Paris, wholly, has got to 20 the acme of its frenzy, whirled all ways by panic madness. At every street-barricade there whirls, simmering, a minor whirlpool, strengthening the barricade, since God knows what is coming ; and all minor whirlpools play distractedly into that grand fire-maelstrom 25 which is lashing round the Bastille.

And so it lashes and it roars. Cholat, the wine-merchant, has become an impromptu cannoneer. See Georget, of the marine service, fresh from Brest, ply the King of Siam's cannon. Singular (if we were not used 30 to the like). Georget lay, last night, taking his ease at his inn ; the King of Siam's cannon also lay, know-

ing nothing of *him* for a hundred years ; yet now, at the right instant, they have got together, and discourse eloquent music ; for, hearing what was toward, Georget sprang from the Brest diligence, and ran. Gardes 5 Françaises, also, will be here, with real artillery. Were not the walls so thick ! Upward from the esplanade, horizontally from all the neighbouring roofs and windows, flashes one irregular deluge of musketry, without effect. The Invalides lie flat, firing comparatively at 10 their ease from behind stone ; hardly through port-holes show the tip of a nose. We fall, shot, and make no impression !

Let the conflagration rage of whatsoever is combustible ! Guard-rooms are burnt, Invalides mess-rooms. 15 A distracted "peruke-maker with two fiery torches" is for burning "the saltpetres of the arsenal," had not a woman run screaming, had not a patriot, with some tincture of natural philosophy, instantly struck the wind out of him (butt of musket on pit of stomach), 20 overturned barrels, and stayed the devouring element. A young, beautiful lady, seized, escaping, in these outer courts, and thought, falsely, to be De Launay's daughter, shall be burnt in De Launay's sight : she lies, swooned, on a paillasse ; but, again, a patriot—it 25 is brave Aubin Bonnemère, the old soldier—dashes in and rescues her. Straw is burnt ; three cartloads of it, hauled hither, go up in white smoke, almost to the choking of patriotism itself ; so that Elie had, with singed brows, to drag back one cart, and Réole, the 30 "gigantic haberdasher," another. Smoke as of Tophet, confusion as of Babel, noise as the crack of doom !

Blood flows, the aliment of new madness. The

wounded are carried into houses of the Rue Cerisaie ; the dying leave their last mandate not to yield till the accursed stronghold fall. And yet, alas ! how fall ? The walls are so thick ! Deputations, three in number, arrive from the Hôtel de Ville, Abbé Fauchet (who was 5 of one) can say with what almost superhuman courage of benevolence. These wave their town-flag in the arched gateway, and stand, rolling their drum, but to no purpose. In such a crack of doom, De Launay cannot hear them, dare not believe them ; they return, 10 with justified rage, the whew of lead still singing in their ears. What to do ? The firemen are here, squirting with their fire-pumps on the Invalides cannon, to wet the touch-holes ; they unfortunately cannot squirt so high, but produce only clouds of spray. Individ- 15 uals of classical knowledge propose *catafalques*. Santerre, the sonorous brewer of the suburb Saint Antoine, advises rather that the place be fired by a "mixture of phosphorus and oil of turpentine spouted up through forcing pumps." O Spinola-Santerre, hast thou the 20 mixture *ready* ? Every man his own engineer ! And still the fire-deluge abates not ; even women are firing, and Turks—at least one woman (with her sweetheart), and one Turk. Gardes Françaises have come ; real cannon, real cannoneers. Usher Maillard is busy; 25 half-pay Elie, half-pay Hulin, rage in the midst of thousands.

How the great Bastille clock ticks (inaudible) in its inner court, there, at its ease, hour after hour ; as if nothing special, for it or the world, were passing ! It 30 tolled one when the firing began, and is now pointing toward five, and still the firing slakes not. Far down,

in their vaults, the seven prisoners hear muffled din as of earthquakes ; their turnkeys answer vaguely.

Woe to thee, De Launay, with thy poor hundred Invalides ! Broglie is distant, and his ears heavy ; Besenval hears, but can send no help. One poor troop of hussars has crept, reconnoitring, cautiously along the quais, as far as Pont Neuf. "We are come to join you," said the captain, for the crowd seems shoreless. A large-headed dwarfish individual, of smoke-bleared aspect, shambles forward, opening his blue lips, for there is sense in him, and croaks, "Alight then, and give up your arms !" The hussar captain is too happy to be escorted to the barriers and dismissed on parole. Who the squat individual was ? Men answer, It is M. Marat, author of the excellent pacific "Avis au Peuple !" Great, truly, O thou remarkable dog-leech, is this thy day of emergence and new-birth ; and yet this same day come four years—but let the curtains of the future hang.

What shall De Launay do ? One thing only De Launay could have done—what he said he would do. Fancy him sitting, from the first, with lighted taper, within arm's-length of the powder magazine ; motionless, like old Roman senator, or bronze lamp-holder ; coldly apprising Thuriot, and all men, by a slight motion of his eye, what his resolution was. Harmless he sat there, while unharmed ; but the king's fortress, meanwhile, could, might, would or should in nowise be surrendered save to the king's messenger ; one old man's life is worthless, so it be lost with honour ; but think, ye brawling canaille, how will it be when a whole Bastille springs skyward ? In such statuesque,

taper-holding attitude, one fancies De Launay might have left Thuriot, the red clerks of the basoche, curé of Saint Stephen, and all the tag-rag and bobtail of the world, to work their will.

And yet, withal, he could not do it. Hast thou considered how each man's heart is so tremulously responsive to the hearts of all men ? hast thou noted how omnipotent is the very sound of many men ? How their shriek of indignation palsies the strong soul ? their howl of contumely withers with unfelt pangs ?<sup>10</sup> The Ritter Glück confessed that the ground-tone of the noblest passage in one of his noblest operas was the voice of the populace he had heard at Vienna, crying to their kaiser, Bread ! Bread ! Great is the combined voice of men, the utterance of their *instincts*,<sup>15</sup> which are truer than their *thoughts*; it is the greatest a man encounters, among the sounds and shadows which make up this world of time ! He who can resist that, has his footing somewhere *beyond* time. De Launay could not do it. Distracted, he hovers between two—hopes in the middle of despair ; surrenders not his fortress ; declares that he will blow it up, seizes torches to blow it up, and does not blow it. Unhappy old De Launay, it is the death-agony of thy Bastille and thee ! Jail, jailoring, and jailor, all<sup>20</sup> three, such as they may have been, must finish.

For four hours now has the world-bedlam roared ; call it the world-chimera, blowing fire ! The poor Invalides have sunk under their battlements, or rise only with reversed muskets ; they have made a white<sup>30</sup> flag of napkins, go beating the chamade, or seeming to beat, for one can hear nothing. The very Swiss at

the portcullis look weary of firing, disheartened in the fire-deluge ; a port-hole at the drawbridge is opened, as by one that would speak. See Huissier Maillard, the shifty man ! On his plank, swinging over the 5 abyss of that stone ditch, plank resting on parapet, balanced by weight of patriots, he hovers perilous—such a dove toward such an ark ! Deftly, thou shifty usher ; one man already fell, and lies smashed, far down there, against the masonry ! Usher Maillard 10 falls not ; deftly, unerring, he walks, with outspread palm. The Swiss holds a paper through his port-hole ; the shifty usher snatches it and returns. Terms of surrender, Pardon, immunity to all ! Are they accepted ? “ Foi d’officier ” (on the word of an officer), 15 answer shall half-pay Hulin, or half-pay Elie—for men do not agree on it—“ they are ! ” Sinks the drawbridge, Usher Maillard bolting it when down ; rushes in the living deluge ; the Bastille is fallen ! Victoire ! La Bastille est prise !

## IX.

### Sketches by Michael Angelo.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

From *Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence*.<sup>1</sup> This is almost entirely description by effect. It is a useful exercise to compare the descriptive diction with that of Selections VIII. and X.

BUT in one separate head there is more tragic attraction than in these : a woman's, three times studied, with divine and subtle care ; sketched and re-sketched in youth and age, beautiful always beyond desire and cruel beyond words ; fairer than heaven and more terrible than hell ; pale with pride and weary with wrong-doing ; a silent anger against God and man burns, white and repressed, through her clear features. In one drawing she wears a head-dress of eastern fashion rather than western, but in effect made out of the artist's mind only ; plaited in the likeness of closely-welded scales as of a chrysalid serpent, raised and waved and rounded in the likeness of a sea-shell. In some inexplicable way all her ornaments seem to partake of her fatal nature, to bear upon them the brand of beauty fresh from hell ; and this through no vulgar machinery or symbolism, no serpentine or

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<sup>1</sup>*Essays and Studies*, London, Chatto & Windus.

otherwise bestial emblem : the bracelets and rings are innocent enough in shape and workmanship ; but in touching her flesh they have become infected with deadly and malignant meaning. Broad bracelets  
 5 divide the shapely splendour of her arms ; over the nakedness of her firm and luminous breasts, just below the neck, there is passed a band as of metal. Her eyes are full of proud and passionless lust after gold and blood ; her hair, close and curled, seems ready to  
 10 shudder in sunder and divide into snakes. Her throat, full and fresh, round and hard to the eye as her bosom and arms, is erect and stately, the head set firm on it without droop or lift of the chin ; her mouth crueler than a tiger's, colder than a snake's, and beautiful  
 15 beyond a woman's. She is the deadlier Venus incarnate :

*πολλὴ μὲν ἐν θεοῖσι κούκ ἀνάνυμος θεά,*

for upon earth also many names might be found for her : Lamia re-transformed, invested now with a fuller  
 20 beauty, but divested of all feminine attributes not native to the snake—a Lamia loveless and unassailable by the sophist, readier to drain life out of her lover than to fade for his sake at his side ; or the Persian Amestris, watching the only breasts on earth more  
 25 beautiful than her own, cut off from her rival's living bosom ; or Cleopatra, not dying, but turning serpent under the serpent's bite ; or that queen of the East who with her husband marked every day as it went by some device of a new and wonderful cruelty. In one  
 30 design, where the cruel and timid face of a king rises behind her, this crowned and cowering head :

stand for Ahab's and hers for that of Jezebel. Another study is in red chalk ; in this the only ornaments are ear-rings. In a third, the serpentine hair is drawn up into a tuft at the crown, with two ringlets hanging heavy and deadly as small tired snakes.      5

## X.

1. **La Gioconda.**<sup>1</sup>
2. **A Roman Villa.**<sup>2</sup>
3. **Augere.**<sup>3</sup>

WALTER PATER.

### I.

*La Gioconda* is, in the truest sense, Leonardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. In suggestiveness, only the *Melancholia* of Dürer is comparable to it; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure set in its marble chair, in that cirque of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least.

The presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all "the ends of the world are come," and the

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<sup>1</sup> From *The Renaissance*.

<sup>2</sup> From *Marius the Epicurean*.

<sup>3</sup> From *Imaginary Portraits*. Printed by kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Company. The first is description by effect; the other two, what in painting is called *genre* study (p. xxi).

eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed ! All the thoughts and experiences of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits ; like the vampire, she <sup>15</sup> has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave ; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her ; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants ; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as St. Anne, <sup>20</sup> the mother of Mary ; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one ; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the <sup>25</sup> modern idea.

## II.

THE traveller, descending from the slopes of Luna, even as he got his first view of the *Port-of-Venus*, would pause by the way, to read the face as it were, of so beautiful a dwelling-place, lying away from the white road, at the point where it began to decline somewhat steeply to the marsh-land below. The building of pale red and yellow marble, mellowed by age, which he saw beyond the gates, was indeed but the exquisite fragment of a once large and sumptuous villa. Two centuries of the play of the sea-wind were in the velvet of the mosses which lay along its inaccessible ledges and angles. Here and there the marble plates had slipped from their places, where the delicate weeds had forced their way. The graceful wildness which prevailed in garden and farm gave place to a singular nicety about the actual habitation, and a still more scrupulous sweetness and order reigned within. The old Roman architects seem to have well understood the decorative value of the floor, the real economy there was, in the production of rich interior effect, of a somewhat lavish expenditure upon the surface they trod on. The pavement of the hall had lost something of its evenness; but though a little rough to the foot, polished and cared for like a piece of silver, looked, as mosaic-work is apt to do, its best in old age. Most noticeable among the ancestral masks, each in its little cedar chest below the cornice, was that of the wasteful but elegant Marcellus, with the quaint resemblance in its yellow waxen features to Marius, just then so full of animation and country

colour. A chamber, curved ingeniously into oval form, which he had added to the mansion, still contained his collection of works of art ; above all, that head of Medusa, for which the villa was famous. The spoilers of one of the old Greek towns on the coast had flung away or lost the thing, as it seemed, in some rapid flight across the river below, from the sands of which it was drawn up in a fisherman's net, with the fine golden *laminæ* still clinging here and there to the bronze. It was Marcellus also who had contrived the prospect-tower of two stories with the white pigeon-house above, so characteristic of the place. The little glazed windows in the uppermost chamber framed each its dainty landscape—the pallid crags of Carrara, like wildly twisted snow-drifts above the purple heath ; the distant harbour with its freight of white marble going to sea ; the lighthouse temple of *Venus Speciosa* on its dark headland, amid the long-drawn curves of white breakers. Even on summer nights the air there had always a motion in it, and drove the scent of new-mown hay along all the passages of the house.

## III.

OF the French town, properly so called, in which the products of successive ages, not without lively touches of the present, are blended together harmoniously with a beauty *specific*—a beauty cisalpine and northern, yet at the same time quite distinct from the massive German picturesque of Ulm, or Freiburg, or Augsburg, and of which Turner has found the ideal in certain of his studies of the rivers of France, a per-

fectly happy conjunction of river and town being of the essence of its physiognomy—the town of Auxerre is perhaps the most complete realization to be found by the actual wanderer. Certainly for picturesque expression it is the most memorable of a distinguished group of three in these parts,—Auxerre, Sens, Troyes—each gathered, as if with deliberate aim at such effect, about the central mass of a huge gray cathedral.

10 Around Troyes the natural picturesque is to be sought only in the rich, almost coarse, summer colouring of the champagne country, of which the very tiles, the plaster and brickwork of its tiny villages and great straggling, village-like farms have caught the warmth. The cathedral, visible far and wide over the fields seemingly of loose wild-flowers, itself a rich mixture of all the varieties of the Pointed style down to the latest *Flamboyant*, may be noticed among the greater French churches for breadth of proportions  
15 internally, and is famous for its almost unrivalled treasure of stained glass, chiefly of a florid, elaborate, later type, with much highly conscious artistic contrivance in design as well as in colour. In one of the richest of its windows, for instance, certain lines of  
20 pearly white run hither and thither, with delightful distant effect, upon ruby and dark blue. Approaching nearer you find it to be a Traveller's window, and those odd lines of white the long walking staves in the hands of Abraham, Raphael, the Magi, and the  
25 other saintly patrons of journeys. The appropriate provincial character of the *bourgeoisie* of Champagne is still to be seen, it would appear, among the  
30

citizens of Troyes. Its streets, for the most part in timber and parqueting, present more than one unaltered specimen of the ancient *hôtel* or town house, with fore-court and garden in the rear; and its more devout citizens would seem even in their church-building to 5 have sought chiefly to please the eyes of those occupied with mundane affairs and out of doors, for they have finished, with abundant outlay, only the vast, useless portals of their parish churches, of surprising height and lightness, in a kind of wildly elegant 10 Gothic on stilts, giving to the streets of Troyes a peculiar air of the grotesque, as if in some quaint nightmare of the Middle Age.

At Sens, thirty miles away to the west, a place of far graver aspect, the name of Jean Cousin denotes<sup>15</sup> a more chastened temper, even in these sumptuous decorations. Here all is cool and composed, with an almost English austerity. The first growth of the Pointed style in England—the hard “early English” of Canterbury—is indeed the creation of William, a 20 master reared in the architectural school of Sens; and the severity of his taste might seem to have acted as a restraining power on all the subsequent changes of manner in this place—changes in themselves for the most part toward luxuriance. In harmony<sup>25</sup> with the atmosphere of its great church is the cleanly quiet of the town, kept fresh by little channels of clear water circulating through its streets, derivatives of the rapid Vanne which falls just below into the Yonne. The Yonne, bedding gracefully, link after 30 link, through a never-ending rustle of poplar trees, beneath lowly vine-clad hills, with relics of delicate

woodland here and there, sometimes close at hand, sometimes leaving an interval of broad meadow, has all the lightsome characteristics of French river-side scenery on a smaller scale than usual, and might pass 5 for the child's fancy of a river, like the rivers of the old miniature painters, blue, and full to a fair green margin. One notices along its course a greater proportion than elsewhere of still untouched old seignorial residences, larger or smaller. The range of old gibbous 10 towns along its banks, expanding their gay quays upon the water-side, have a common character—Joigny, Ville-neuve, St. Julien-du-Sault—yet tempt us to tarry at each and examine its relics, old glass, and the like, of the Renaissance or the Middle Age, for the acquisition of 15 real, though minor lessons, on the various arts which have left themselves a central monument at Auxerre.— Auxerre ! A slight ascent in the winding road ! and you have before you the prettiest town in France—the broad framework of vineyard sloping upward 20 gently to the horizon, with distant white cottages inviting one to walk : the quiet curve of river below, with all the river-side details : the three great purple-tiled masses of St. Germain, St. Pierre, and the cathedral of St. Étienne, rising out of the crowded houses 25 with more than the usual abruptness and irregularity of French building. Here that rare artist, the susceptible painter of architecture, if he understands the value alike of line and mass, of broad masses and delicate lines, has “a subject made to his hand.”

30 A veritable country of the vine, it presents nevertheless an expression peaceful rather than radiant. Perfect type of that happy mean between northern

earnestness and the luxury of the south, for which we prize midland France, its physiognomy is not quite happy—attractive in part for its melancholy. Its most characteristic atmosphere is to be seen when the tide of light and distant cloud is travelling quickly 5 over it, when rain is not far off, and every touch of art or of time on its old building is defined in clear gray. A fine summer ripens its grapes into a valuable wine ; but in spite of that it seems always longing for a larger and more continuous allowance of the sun-<sup>10</sup> shine that is so much to its taste. You might fancy something querulous or plaintive in that rustling movement of the vine-leaves, as blue-frocked Jacques Bonhomme finishes his day's labour among them.

## XI.

### Blois.

#### HENRY JAMES.

From *A Little Tour in France*.<sup>1</sup> Selections XI, XII, and XIII are also examples of *genre* study. They should be examined to determine by what means the author suggests constantly the typical aspect.

YOUR business at Tours is to make excursions, and if you make them all, you will be very well occupied. Touraine is rich in antiquities ; and an hour's drive from the town in almost any direction will bring you to the knowledge of some curious fragment of domestic or ecclesiastical architecture, some turreted manor, some lonely tower, some gabled village, or historic site. Even, however, if you do everything,—which was not my case,—you cannot hope to relate everything, and, fortunately for you, the excursions divide themselves into the greater and the less. You may achieve most of the greater in a week or two ; but a summer in Touraine (which, by the way, must be a charming thing) would contain none too many days for the others. If you come down to Tours from Paris, your best economy is to spend a few days at Blois, where a clumsy, but rather attractive little inn,

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<sup>1</sup> Printed by kind permission of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Company.

on the edge of the river, will offer you a certain amount of that familiar and intermittent hospitality which a few weeks spent in the French provinces teaches you to regard as the highest attainable form of accommodation. Such an economy I was unable 5 to practise. I could only go to Blois (from Tours) to spend the day ; but this feat I accomplished twice over. It is a very sympathetic little town, as we say nowadays, and one might easily resign one's self to a week there. Seated on the north bank of the Loire, 10 it presents a bright, clean face to the sun, and has that aspect of cheerful leisure which belongs to all white towns that reflect themselves in shining waters. It is the water-front only of Blois, however, that exhibits this fresh complexion ; the interior is of a 15 proper brownness, as befits a signally historic city. The only disappointment I had there was the discovery that the castle, which is the special object of one's pilgrimage, does not overhang the river, as I had always allowed myself to understand. It overhangs 20 the town, but it is scarcely visible from the stream. That peculiar good fortune is reserved for Amboise and Chaumont.

The Château de Blois is one of the most beautiful and elaborate of all the old royal residences of this 25 part of France, and I suppose it should have all the honours of my description. As you cross its threshold, you step straight into the brilliant movement of the French Renaissance. But it is too rich to describe —I can only touch it here and there. It must be pre- 30 mised that in speaking of it as one sees it to-day, one speaks of a monument unsparingly restored. The

work of restoration has been as ingenious as it is profuse, but it rather chills the imagination. This is perhaps almost the first thing you feel as you approach the castle from the streets of the town. These little 5 streets, as they leave the river, have pretensions to romantic steepness : one of them, indeed, which resolves itself into a high staircase with divergent wings (*the escalier monumental*), achieved this result so successfully as to remind me vaguely—I hardly 10 know why—of the great slope of the Capitol, beside the Ara Cœli, at Rome. The view of that part of the castle which figures to-day as the back (it is the only aspect I had seen reproduced) exhibits the marks of restoration with the greatest assurance. The long 15 façade, consisting only of balconied windows deeply recessed, erects itself on the summit of a considerable hill, which gives a fine, plunging movement to its foundations. The deep niches of the windows are all aglow with colour. They have been repainted with 20 red and blue, relieved with gold figures ; and each of them looks more like the royal box at a theatre than like the aperture of a palace dark with memories. For all this, however, and in spite of the fact that, as 25 in some others of the châteaux of Touraine (always excepting the colossal Chambord, which is not in Touraine !), there is less vastness than one had expected, the least hospitable aspect of Blois is abundantly impressive. Here, as elsewhere, lightness and grace are the keynote ; and the recesses of the windows, with their happy proportions, their sculpture, and their colour, are the empty frames 30 pictures. They need the figure of a F

complete them, or of a Diane de Poitiers, or even of a Henry III. The base of this exquisite structure emerges from a bed of light verdure, which has been allowed to mass itself there, and which contributes to the springing look of the walls ; while on the right it 5 joins the most modern portion of the castle, the building erected, on foundations of enormous height and solidity, in 1635, by Gaston d'Orléans. This fine, frigid mansion—the proper view of it is from the court within—is one of the masterpieces of François 10 Mansard, whom a kind providence did not allow to make over the whole palace in the superior manner of his superior age. This had been a part of Gaston's plan—he was a blunderer born, and this precious project was worthy of him. The execution of it would 15 surely have been one of the great misdeeds of history. Partially performed, the misdeed is not altogether to be regretted; for as one stands in the court of the castle and lets one's eye wander from the splendid wing of Francis I.—which is the last word of free and 20 joyous invention—to the ruled lines and blank spaces of the ponderous pavilion of Mansard, one makes one's reflections upon the advantage, in even the least personal of the arts, of having something to say, and upon the stupidity of a taste which had ended by 25 becoming an aggregation of negatives. Gaston's wing, taken by itself, has much of the *bel air*, which was to belong to the architecture of Louis XIV. ; but, taken in contrast to its flowering, laughing, living neighbour, it marks the difference between inspiration 30 and calculation. We scarcely grudge it its place, however, for it adds a price to the rest of the château.

We have entered the court, by the way, by jumping over the walls. The more orthodox method is to follow a modern terrace, which leads to the left, from the side of the château that I began by speaking of, 5 and passes round, ascending, to a little square on a considerably higher level, which is not, like the very modern square on which the back (as I have called it) looks out, a thoroughfare. This small, empty *place*, oblong in form, at once bright and quiet, with a 10 certain grass-grown look, offers an excellent setting to the entrance-front of the palace—the wing of Louis XII. The restoration here has been lavish; but it was, perhaps, but an inevitable reaction against the injuries, still more lavish, by which the unfortunate 15 building had long been overwhelmed. It had fallen into a state of ruinous neglect, relieved only by the misuse proceeding from successive generations of soldiers, for whom its charming chambers served as barrack room. Whitewashed, mutilated, dishonoured, 20 the castle of Blois may be said to have escaped simply with its life. This is the history of Amboise as well, and is to a certain extent the history of Chambord. Delightful, at any rate, was the refreshed façade of Louis XII. as I stood and looked at it one bright 25 September morning. In that soft, clear, merry light of Touraine, everything shows, everything speaks. Charming are the taste, the happy proportions, the colour of this beautiful front, to which the new feeling for a purely domestic architecture—an architecture 30 of security and tranquillity, in which art could indulge itself—gave an air of youth and gladness. It is true that for a long time to come the castle of

Blois was neither very safe nor very quiet ; but its dangers came from within, from the evil passions of its inhabitants, and not from siege or invasion. The front of Louis XII. is of red brick, crossed here and there with purple ; and the purple slate of the high 5 roof, relieved with chimneys beautifully treated, and with the embroidered caps of pinnacles and arches, with the porcupine of Louis, the ermine and the festooned rope which formed the devices of Anne of Brittany—the tone of this rich-looking roof carries 10 out the mild glow of the wall. The wide, fair windows look as if they had expanded to let in the rosy dawn of the Renaissance. Charming, for that matter, are the windows of all the châteaux of Touraine, with their squareness corrected (as it is not in the 15 Tudor architecture) by the curve of the upper corners, which makes this line look—above the expressive aperture—like a pencilled eyebrow. The low door of this front is crowned by a high, deep niche, in which, under a splendid canopy, stiffly astride of a 20 stiffly draped charger, sits in profile an image of the good King Louis. Good as he had been—the father of his people, as he was called (I believe he remitted various taxes)—he was not good enough to pass muster at the Revolution ; and the effigy I have just 25 described is no more than a reproduction of the primitive statue demolished at that period.

Pass beneath it into the court, and the sixteenth century closes round you. It is a pardonable flight of fancy to say that the expressive faces of an age in 30 which human passions lay very near the surface seem to look out at you from the windows, from the balc-

nies, from the thick foliage of the sculpture. The portion of the wing of Louis XII. that looks toward the court is supported on a deep arcade. On your right is the wing erected by Francis I., the reverse of the mass of building which you see on approaching the castle. This *exquisité*, this extravagant, this transcendent piece of architecture is the most joyous utterance of the French Renaissance. It is covered with an embroidery of sculpture, in which every detail is worthy of the hand of a goldsmith. In the middle of it, or rather a little to the left, rises the famous winding staircase (plausibly, but I believe not religiously, restored), which even the ages which most misused it must vaguely have admired. It forms a kind of chiselled cylinder, with wide interstices, so that the stairs are open to the air. Every inch of this structure, of its balconies, its pillars, its great central columns, is wrought over with lovely images, strange and ingenious devices, prime among which is the great heraldic salamander of Francis I. The salamander is everywhere at Blois—over the chimneys, over the doors, on the walls. This whole quarter of the castle bears the stamp of that eminently pictorial prince. The running cornice along the top of the front is like an unfolded, an elongated, bracelet. The windows of the attic are like shrines for saints. The gargoyle, the medallions, the statuettes, the festoons, are like the elaboration of some precious cabinet rather than the details of a building exposed to the weather and the ages. In the interior there is a profusion of restoration, and it is all restoration in colour. This has been, evidently, a work of great energy and cost, but it will

easily strike you as overdone. The universal freshness is a discord, a false note ; it seems to light up the dusky past with an unnatural glare. Begun in the reign of Louis Philippe, this terrible process—the more terrible always the more you admit that it has 5 been necessary—has been carried so far that there is now scarcely a square inch of the interior that has the colour of the past upon it. It is true that the place had been so coated over with modern abuse that something was needed to keep it alive ; it is only, 10 perhaps, a pity that the restorers, not content with saving its life, should have undertaken to restore its youth. The love of consistency, in such a business, is a dangerous lure. All the old apartments have been rechristened, as it were ; the geography of the 15 castle has been re-established. The guard rooms, the bedrooms, the closets, the oratories, have recovered their identity. Every spot connected with the murder of the Duke of Guise is pointed out by a small, shrill boy, who takes you from room to room, and 20 who has learned his lesson in perfection. The place is full of Catherine de' Medici, of Henry III., of memories, of ghosts, of echoes, of possible evocations and revivals. It is covered with crimson and gold. The fireplaces and the ceilings are magnificent; 25 they look like expensive "sets" at the grand opera.

I should have mentioned that below, in the court, the front of the wing of Gaston d'Orléans faces you as you enter, so that the place is a course of French history. Inferior in beauty and grace to the other 30 portions of the castle, the wing is yet a nobler monument than the memory of Gaston deserves. The

second of the sons of Henry IV.,—who was no more fortunate as a father than as a husband,—younger brother of Louis XIII., and father of the great Mademoiselle, the most celebrated, most ambitious, most self-complacent, and most unsuccessful *fille à marier* in French history, passed, in enforced retirement at the Castle of Blois, the close of a life of clumsy intrigues against Cardinal Richelieu, in which his rashness was only equalled by his pusillanimity, and his ill-luck to by his inaccessibility to correction, and which, after so many follies and shames, was properly summed up in the project—begun, but not completed—of demolishing the beautiful habitation of his exile in order to erect a better one. With Gaston d'Orléans, however, who lived there without dignity, the history of the Château de Blois declines. Its interesting period is that of the wars of religion. It was the chief residence of Henry III., and the scene of the principal events of his depraved and dramatic reign. It has been restored more than enough, as I have said, by architects and decorators ; the visitor, as he moves through its empty rooms, which are at once brilliant and ill-lighted (they have not been refurnished), undertakes a little restoration of his own. His imagination helps itself from the things that remain ; he tries to see the life of the sixteenth century in its form and dress—its turbulence, its passions, its loves and hates, its treacheries, falsities, touches of faith, its latitude of personal development, its presentation of the whole nature, its nobleness of costume, charm of speech, splendour of taste, unequalled picturesqueness. The picture is full of movement, of contrasted light and darkness, full

altogether of abominations. Mixed up with them all is the great name of religion, so that the drama wants nothing to make it complete. What episode was ever more perfect—looked at as a dramatic occurrence—than the murder of the Duke of Guise? The insolent prosperity of the victim ; the weakness, the vices, the terrors, of the author of the deed ; the perfect execution of the plot ; the accumulation of horror in what followed it, give it, as a crime, a kind of immortal solidity.

But we must not take the Château de Blois too hard : I went there, after all, by way of entertainment. If among these sinister memories your visit should threaten to prove a tragedy, there is an excellent way of removing the impression. You may treat yourself at Blois to a very cheerful after-piece. There is a charming industry practised there, and practised in charming conditions. Follow the bright little quay down the river till you get quite out of the town, and reach the point where the road beside the Loire becomes sinuous and attractive, turns the corner of diminutive headlands, and makes you wonder what is beyond. Let not your curiosity induce you, however, to pass by a modest white villa which overlooks the stream, enclosed in a fresh little court ; for here dwells an artist—an artist in faience. There is no sort of sign, and the place looks peculiarly private. But if you ring at the gate you will not be turned away. You will, on the contrary, be ushered upstairs into a parlour—there is nothing resembling a shop—encumbered with specimens of remarkably handsome pottery. The work is of the best—a careful reproduction of old forms, colours, devices ; and the master of the

establishment is one of those completely artistic types that are often found in France. His reception is as friendly as his work is ingenious ; and I think it is not too much to say that you like the work the better because he has produced it. His vases, cups and jars, lamps, platters, *plaques*, with their brilliant glaze, their innumerable figures, their family likeness, and wide variations, are scattered through his occupied rooms ; they serve at once as his stock-in-trade and as household ornament. As we all know, this is an age of prose, of machinery, of wholesale production, of coarse and hasty processes. But one brings away from the establishment of the very intelligent M. Ulysse the sense of a less eager activity and a greater search for perfection. He has but a few workmen, and he gives them plenty of time. The place makes a little vignette, leaves an impression,—the quiet white house in its garden on the road by the wide, clear river, without the smoke, the bustle, the ugliness, of so much of our modern industry. It ought to gratify Mr. Ruskin.

## XII.

### Spring in a Side Street.

BRANDER MATTHEWS.

From *Vignettes of Manhattan*.<sup>1</sup> This is an especially careful study in "local colour." The details, that is, belong, not to any large city, but to New York. To secure local colour has been a main effort in many recent short stories, as in George W. Cable's of Creole Louisiana, Miss Murfree's of the Tennessee Mountains, Miss Wilkins's of the New England village, J. M. Barrie's of the Scotch village, W. D. Howells's of Boston, and so on through a long list.

Students in advanced courses may profitably spend some time in attempting stories each of his own particular environment (see *Specimens of Narration, Introduction*); but every student should be urged from the beginning to realize his own environment in description.

In the city the spring comes earlier than it does in the country, and the horse-chestnuts in the sheltered squares sometimes break into blossom a fortnight before their brethren in the open fields. That year the spring came earlier than usual, both in the country and in the city, for March, going out like a lion, made an April-fool of the following month, and the huge banks of snow heaped high by the sidewalks vanished in three or four days, leaving the gutters only a little

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<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1894, Harper & Brothers. Printed by kind permission of the publishers.

thicker with mud than they are accustomed to be. Very trying to the convalescent was the uncertain weather, with its obvious inability to know its own mind, with its dark fog one morning and its brisk  
5 wind in the afternoon, with its mid-day as bright as June and its sudden chill descending before nightfall.

Yet when the last week of April came, and the grass in the little square around the corner was green again, and the shrubs were beginning to flower out, the  
10 sick man also felt his vigour returning. His strength came back with the spring, and restored health sent fresh blood coursing through his veins as the sap was rising in the branches of the tree before his window. He had had a hard struggle, he knew, although he did  
15 not suspect that more than once he had wrestled with death itself. Now his appetite had awakened again, and he had more force to withstand the brooding sadness which sought to master him.

The tree before his window was but a shabby sycamore, and the window belonged to a hall bedroom in a shabby boarding-house down a side street. The young man himself lay back in the steamer chair lent him by one of the few friends he had in town, and his overcoat was thrown over his knees. His hands,  
25 shrunken yet sinewy, lay crossed upon a book in his lap. His body was wasted by sickness, but the frame was well knit and solid. His face was still white and thin, although the yellow pallor of the sick-bed had gone already. His scanty boyish beard that curled  
30 about his chin had not been trimmed for two months, and his uncut brown hair fell thickly on the collar of his coat. His dark eyes bore the mark of recent

suffering, but they revealed also a steadfast soul, strong to withstand misfortune.

His room was on the north side of the street, and the morning sun shone in his window, as he lay back in the chair, grateful for its warmth. A heavy cart 5 lumbered along slowly over the worn and irregular pavement ; it came to a stand at the corner, and a gang of workmen swiftly emptied it of the steel rails it contained, dropping them on the sidewalk one by one with a loud clang which reverberated harshly far down 10 the street. From the little knot of men who were re-laying the horse-car track came cries of command, and then a rail would drop into position, and be spiked swiftly to its place. Then the labourers would draw aside while an arrested horse-car urged forward again, 15 with the regular footfall of its one horse, as audible above the mighty roar of the metropolis as the jingle of the little bell on the horse's collar. At last there came from over the house-tops a loud whistle of escaping steam, followed shortly by a dozen similar 20 signals, proclaiming the mid-day rest. A rail or two more clanged down on the others, and then the cart rumbled away. The workmen relaying the track had already seated themselves on the curb to eat their dinner, while one of them had gone to the saloon at 25 the corner for a large can of the new beer advertised in the window by the gaudy lithograph of a frisky young goat bearing a plump young goddess on his back.

The invalid was glad of the respite from the more 30 violent noises of track-layers, for his head was not yet as clear as it might be, and his nerves were strained

by pain. He leaned forward and looked down at the street below, catching the eye of a young man who was bawling "Straw-b'rees! straw-b'rees!" at the top of an unmelodious voice. The invalid smiled, for he knew that the street venders of strawberries were an infallible sign of spring—an indication of its arrival as indisputable as the small square labels announcing that three of the houses opposite to him were "To Let." The first of May was at hand. He wondered whether the flower-market in Union Square had already opened; and he recalled the early mornings of the preceding spring, when the girl he loved, the girl who had promised to marry him, had gone with him to Union Square to pick out young roses and full blown geraniums worthy to bloom in the windows of her parlour looking out on Central Park.

He thought of her often that morning, and without bitterness, though their engagement had been broken in the fall, three months or more before he was taken sick. He had not seen her since Christmas, and he found himself wondering how she would look that afternoon, and whether she was happy. His reverie was broken by the jangling notes of an ill-tuned piano in the next house, separated from his little room only by a thin party-wall. Someone was trying to pick out the simple tune of "Wait till the clouds roll by." Seemingly it was the practice hour for one of the children next door, whose playful voices he had often heard. Seemingly also the task was unpleasant, for the piano and the tune and the hearer suffered from the ill-will of the childish performer.

A sudden hammering of a steel rail in the street

below notified him the nooning was over, and that the workmen had gone back to their labours. Somehow he had failed to hear the stroke of one from the steeple of the church at the corner of the avenue, a short block away. Now he became conscious of a permeating odour, and he knew that the luncheon hour of the boarding-house had arrived. He had waked early, and his breakfast had been very light. He felt ready for food, and he was glad when the servant brought him up a plate of cold beef and a saucer of prunes. His appetite was excellent, and he ate with relish and enjoyment. 5

When he had made an end of his unpretending meal, he leaned back again in his chair. A turbulent wind blew the dust of the street high in the air and set swinging the budding branches of the sycamore before the window. As he looked at the tender green of the young leaves dancing before him in the sunlight he felt the spring-time stir his blood ; he was strong again with the strength of youth ; he was able to cope with all morbid fancies, and to cast away all repining. He wished himself in the country—some-where where there were brooks and groves and grass—somewhere where there were quiet and rest and sur-cease of noise—somewhere where there were time and space to think out the past and to plan out the future 20 resolutely—somewhere where there were not two hand-organs at opposite ends of the block vying which should be the more violent, one playing “Annie Laurie” and the other “Annie Rooney.” He winced as the struggle between the two organs attained its 25 height, while the child next door pounded the piano more viciously than before. Then he smiled. 30

With returning health, why should he mind petty annoyances? In a week or so he would be able to go back to the store and to begin again to earn his own living. No doubt the work would be hard at first, 5 but hard work was what he needed now. For the sake of its results in the future, and for its own sake also, he needed severe labour. Other young men there were a-plenty in the thick of the struggle, but he knew himself as stout of heart as any in the whole city, and 10 why might not fortune favour him too? With money and power and position he could hold his own in New York; and perhaps some of those who thought little of him now would then be glad to know him.

While he lay back in the steamer chair in his hall 15 room the shadows began to lengthen a little, and the long day drew nearer to its end. When next he roused himself the hand-organs had both gone away, and the child next door had given over her practising, and the street was quiet again, save for the high notes 20 of a soprano voice singing a florid aria by an open window in the conservatory of music in the next block, and save also for an unusual rattle of vehicles drawing up almost in front of the door of the boarding-house. With an effort he raised himself, and saw 25 a line of carriages on the other side of the way, moving slowly toward the corner. A swirling sand-storm sprang up again in the street below, and a simoom of dust almost hid from him the faces of those who sat in the carriages—young girls dressed in light colours, 30 and young men with buttoned frock-coats. They were chatting easily; now and again a gay laugh rang out.

He wondered if it were time for the wedding. With difficulty he twisted himself in his chair and took from the bureau behind him an envelope containing the wedding-cards. The ceremony was fixed for three. He looked at his watch, and he saw that it 5 lacked but a few minutes of that hour. His hand trembled a little as he put the watch back in his pocket ; and he gazed steadily into space until the bell in the steeple of the church at the corner of the avenue struck three times. The hour appointed for 10 the wedding had arrived. There were still carriages driving up swiftly to deposit belated guests.

The convalescent young man in the little hall bedroom of the shabby boarding-house in the side street was not yet strong enough to venture out in the spring 15 sunshine and to be present at the ceremony. But as he lay there in the rickety steamer chair with the old overcoat across his knees, he had no difficulty in evoking the scene in the church. He saw the middle-aged groom standing at the rail awaiting the bride. 20 He heard the solemn and yet joyous strains of the wedding-march. He saw the bride pass slowly up the aisle on the arm of her father, with the lace veil scarcely lighter or fairer than her own filmy hair. He wondered whether she would be pale, and whether 25 her conscience would reproach her as she stood at the altar. He heard the clergyman ask the questions and pronounce the benediction. He saw the new-made wife go down the aisle again on the arm of her husband. He sighed wearily, and lay back in his chair 30 with his eyes closed, as though to keep out the unwelcome vision. He did not move when the carriages

again crowded past his door, and went up to the church porch one after another in answer to hoarse calls from conflicting voices.

He lay there for a long while motionless and silent.  
5 He was thinking about himself, about his hopes, which had been as bright as the sunshine of spring, about his bitter disappointment. He was pondering on the mysteries of the universe, and asking himself whether he could be of any use to the world—for he still had 10 high ambitions. He was wondering what might be the value of any one man's labour for his fellow-men, and he thought harshly of the order of things. He said to himself that we all slip out of sight when we die, and the waters close over us, for the best of us are 15 soon forgotten, and so are the worst, since it makes little difference whether the coin you throw into the pool is gold or copper—the rarer metal does not make the more ripples. Then, as he saw the long shafts of almost level sunshine sifting through the tiny leaves 20 of the tree before his window, he took heart again as he recalled the great things accomplished by one man. He gave over his mood of self-pity; and he even smiled at the unconscious conceit of his attitude toward himself.

25 He was recalled from his long reverie by the thundering of a heavy fire-engine, which crashed its way down the street, with its rattling hose-reel tearing along after it. In the stillness that followed, broken only by the warning whistles of the engine as it 30 crossed avenue after avenue further and further east, he found time to remember that every man's struggle forward helps along the advance of mankind at large.

The humble fireman who does his duty and dies serves the cause of humanity.

The swift twilight of New York was almost upon him when he was next distracted from his thoughts by the crossing shouts of loud-voiced men bawling forth 5 a catch-penny extra of a third-rate evening paper. The cries arose from both sides of the street at once, and they ceased while the fellows sold a paper here and there to the householders whose curiosity called them to the doorstep. 10

The sky was clear, and a single star shone out sharply. The air was fresh, and yet balmy. The clanging of rails had ceased an hour before, and the gang of men who were spiking the iron into place had dispersed each to his own home. The day was 15 drawing to an end. Again there was an odour of cooking diffused through the house, heralding the dinner hour.

But the young man who lay back in the steamer chair in the hall bedroom of the boarding-house was 20 unconscious of all except his own thoughts. Before him was a picture of a train of cars speeding along moonlit valleys, and casting a hurrying shadow. In this train, as he saw it, was the bride of that afternoon, borne away by the side of her husband. But it 25 was the bride he saw, and not the husband. He saw her pale face and her luminous eyes and her ashen-gold hair; and he wondered whether in the years to come she would be as happy as if she had kept her promise to marry him. 30

### XIII.

#### Scenes from Western Life.

#### HAMLIN GARLAND.

From *Main Travelled Roads*.<sup>1</sup> These brief extracts are essentially of the same character, but lose, of course, much of their flavour by being detached.

##### I. SUNRISE.

IN the windless September dawn a voice went singing, a man's voice, singing a cheap and common air. Yet something in the *elan* of it all told he was young, jubilant, and a happy lover.

Above the level belt of timber to the east a vast dome of pale undazzling gold was rising, silently and swiftly. Jays called in the thickets where the maples flamed amid the green oaks, with irregular splashes of red and orange. The grass was crisp with frost under the feet, the road smooth and gray-white in colour, the air was indescribably sweet, resonant, and stimulating. No wonder the man sang.

He came into view around the curve in the lane. He had a fork on his shoulder, a graceful and polished tool. His straw hat was tilted on the back of his head, his rough, faded coat buttoned close to the chin, and he wore thin buckskin gloves on his hands. He

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<sup>1</sup> The Arena Publishing Company, Boston.

looked muscular and intelligent, and was evidently about twenty-two or three years of age.

As he walked on, and the sunrise came nearer to him, he stopped his song. The broadening heavens had a majesty and sweetness that made him forget the 5 physical joy of happy youth. He grew almost sad with the great vague thoughts and emotions which rolled in his brain as the wonder of the morning grew.

He walked more slowly, mechanically following the road, his eyes on the ever-shifting streaming banners 10 of rose and pale green, which made the east too glorious for any words to tell. The air was so still it seemed to await expectantly the coming of the sun.

Then his mind flew back to Agnes. Would she see it? She was at work, getting breakfast, but he hoped 15 she had time to see it. He was in that mood so common to him now, when he could not fully enjoy any sight or sound unless he could share it with her. Far down the road he heard the sharp clatter of a wagon. The roosters were calling near and far, in many keys 20 and tunes. The dogs were barking, cattle-bells jangling in the wooded pastures, and as the youth passed farmhouses, lights in the kitchen windows showed that the women were astir about breakfast, and the sound of voices and currycombs at the barn told 25 that the men were at their daily chores.

And the east bloomed broader. The dome of gold grew brighter, the faint clouds here and there flamed with a flush of red. The frost began to glisten with a reflected colour. The youth dreamed as he walked ; 30 his broad face and deep earnest eyes caught and reflected some of the beauty and majesty of the sky.

## II. THRESHING.

Boo-oo-oo-oom, boo-woo-woo-oom-oom-ow-owm, yarr-yarr ! The whirling cylinder boomed, roared and snarled as it rose in speed. At last, when its tone became a rattling yell, David nodded to the pitchers, 5 rasped his hands together, the sheaves began to fall from the stack, the band-cutter, knife in hand, slashed the bands in twain, and the feeder, with easy majestic motion, gathered them under his arm, rolled them out into an even belt of entering wheat, on which the cylinder tore with its frightful, ferocious snarl.

Will was very happy in his quiet way. He enjoyed the smooth roll of his great muscles, the sense of power he felt in his hands as he lifted, turned, and swung the heavy sheaves two by two down upon the 15 table, where the band-cutter madly slashed away. His frame, sturdy rather than tall, was nevertheless lithe, and he made a fine figure to look at, so Agnes thought, as she came out a moment and bowed and smiled to both the young men.

20 This scene, one of the jolliest and most sociable of the Western farm, had a charm quite aside from human companionship. The beautiful yellow straw entering the cylinder ; the clear yellow-brown wheat pulsing out at the side ; the broken straw, chaff, and dust puffing out on the great stacker ; the cheery whistling and calling of the driver ; the keen, crisp air, and the bright sun somehow weirdly suggestive of the passage of time.

## III. HILL-COUNTRY.

The ride from Milwaukee to the Mississippi is a fine ride at any time, superb in summer. To lean back in a reclining-chair and whirl away in a breezy July day, past lakes, groves of oak, past fields of barley being reaped, past hay-fields, where the heavy grass is toppling before the swift sickle, is a panorama of delight, a road full of delicious surprises, where down a sudden vista lakes open, or a distant wooded hill looms darkly blue, or swift streams, foaming deep down the solid rock, send whiffs of cool breezes in at <sup>5</sup> the window.

It has majesty, breadth. The farming has nothing apparently petty about it. All seems vigorous, youthful, and prosperous. Mr. Howard McLane in his chair let his newspaper fall on his lap, and gazed out <sup>15</sup> upon it with dreaming eyes. It had a certain mysterious glamour to him; the lakes were cooler and brighter to his eye, the greens fresher, and the grain more golden than to anyone else, for he was coming back to it all after an absence of ten years. It was, <sup>20</sup> besides, *his* West. He still took pride in being a Western man.

His mind all day flew ahead of the train to the little town far on toward the Mississippi, where he had spent his boyhood and youth. As the train passed <sup>25</sup> the Wisconsin River, with its curiously carved cliffs, its cold, dark, swift-swirling water eating slowly under cedar-clothed banks, Howard began to feel curious little movements of the heart, like a lover as he nears his sweetheart.

The hills changed in character, growing more intimately recognizable. They rose higher as the train left the ridge and passed down into the Black River valley, and specifically into the La Crosse valley.  
5 They ceased to have any hint of upheavals of rock, and became simply parts of the ancient level left standing after the water had practically given up its post-glacial, scooping action.

It was about six o'clock as he caught sight of the  
10 dear broken line of hills on which his baby eyes had looked thirty-five years ago. A few minutes later and the train drew up at the grimy little station set in at the hillside, and, giving him just time to leap off, plunged on again toward the West. Howard felt a  
15 ridiculous weakness in his legs as he stepped out upon the broiling hot splintery planks of the station and faced the few idlers lounging about. He simply stood and gazed with the same intensity and absorption one of the idlers might show standing before the  
20 Brooklyn Bridge.

The town caught and held his eyes first. How poor, and dull, and sleepy, and squalid it seemed ! The one main street ended at the hillside at his left, and stretched away to the north, between two rows of  
25 the usual village stores, unrelieved by a tree or a touch of beauty. An unpaved street, drab-coloured, miserable, rotting wooden buildings, with the inevitable battlements—the same, only worse, was the town.

The same, only more beautiful still, was the majestic amphitheatre of green wooded hills that circled the horizon, and toward which he lifted his eyes. He thrilled at the sight.

"Glorious!" he cried involuntarily.

Accustomed to the White Mountains, to the Alleghanies, he had wondered if these hills would retain their old-time charm. They did. He took off his hat to them as he stood there. Richly wooded, with gently-sloping green sides, rising to massive square or rounded tops with dim vistas, they glowed down upon the squalid town, gracious, lofty in their greeting, immortal in their vivid and delicate beauty.

Over the western wall of the circling amphitheatre the sun was setting. A few scattering clouds were drifting on the west wind, their shadows sliding down the green and purple slopes. The dazzling sunlight flamed along the luscious velvety grass, and shot amid the rounded, distant purple peaks, and streamed in bars of gold and crimson across the blue mist of the narrower upper coulés.

The heart of the young man swelled with pleasure almost like pain, and the eyes of the silent older man took on a far-off, dreaming look, as he gazed at the scene which had repeated itself a thousand times in his life, but of whose beauty he never spoke.

Far down to the left was the break in the wall, through which the river ran, on its way to join the Mississippi. As they climbed slowly among the hills, the valley they had left grew still more beautiful, as the squalor of the little town was hid by the dusk of distance. Both men were silent for a long time. Howard knew the peculiarities of his companion too well to make any remarks or ask any questions, and besides it was a genuine pleasure to ride with one who

could feel that silence was the only speech amid such splendours.

Once they passed a little brook singing in a mournfully sweet way its eternal song over its pebbles. It called back to Howard the days when he and Grant, his younger brother, had fished in this little brook for trout, with trousers rolled above the knee and wrecks of hats upon their heads.

#### IV. RAIN ON THE FARM.

The rain was still falling, sweeping down from the half-seen hills, wreathing the wooded peaks with a gray garment of mist, and filling the valley with a whitish cloud.

It fell around the house drearily. It ran down into the tubs placed to catch it, dripped from the mossy pump, and drummed on the upturned milk-pails, and upon the brown and yellow bee-hives under the maple-trees. The chickens seemed depressed, but the irrepressible bluejay screamed amid it all, with the same insolent spirit, his plumage untarnished by the wet. The barnyard showed a horrible mixture of mud and mire, through which Howard caught glimpses of the men, slumping to and fro without more additional protection than a ragged coat and a shapeless felt hat.

In the sitting-room where his mother sat sewing there was not an ornament, save the etching he had brought. The clock stood on a small shelf, its dial so much defaced that one could not tell the time of day; and when it struck, it was with noticeably disproportionate deliberation, as if it wished to correct any mis-

take into which the family might have fallen by reason of its illegible dial.

The paper on the walls showed the first concession of the Puritans to the Spirit of Beauty, and was made up of a heterogeneous mixture of flowers of unheard-of shapes and colours, arranged in four different ways along the wall. There were no books, no music, and only a few newspapers in sight—a bare, blank, cold, drab-coloured shelter from the rain, not a home. Nothing cosey, nothing heart-warming ; a grim and 10 horrible shed.

#### V. A DAKOTA PRAIRIE.

Leaving Rob to sputter over his cooking, Seagraves took his slow way off down toward the oxen grazing in a little hollow. The scene was characteristically, wonderfully beautiful. It was about five o'clock in a 15 day in late June, and the level plain was green and yellow, and infinite in reach as a sea ; the lowering sun was casting over its distant swells a faint impalpable mist, through which the breaking teams on the neighbouring claims ploughed noiselessly, as figures in 20 a dream. The whistle of gophers, the faint, wailing, fluttering cry of the falling plover, the whir of the swift-winged prairie-pigeon, or the quack of a lonely duck, came through the shimmering air. The lark's infrequent whistle, piercingly sweet, broke from the 25 longer grass in the swales near by. No other climate, sky, plain, could produce the same unnamable weird charm. No tree to wave, no grass to rustle ; scarcely a sound of domestic life ; only the faint melancholy

soughing of the wind in the short grass, and the voices of the wild things of the prairie.

Seagraves, an impressionable young man (junior editor of the Boomtown *Spike*), threw himself down on 5 the sod, pulled his hat-rim down over his eyes, and looked away over the plain. It was the second year of Boomtown's existence, and Seagraves had not yet grown restless under its monotony. Around him the gophers played saucily. Teams were moving here and 10 there across the sod, with a peculiar noiseless, effortless motion, that made them seem as calm, lazy, and unsubstantial as the mist through which they made their way ; even the sound of passing wagons was a sort of low, well-fed, self-satisfied chuckle.

15 Seagraves, "holding down a claim" near Rob, had come to see his neighbouring "bach" because feeling the need of company ; but now that he was near enough to hear him prancing about getting supper, he was content to lie alone on a slope of the green 20 sod.

The silence of the prairie at night was well-nigh terrible. Many a night, as Seagraves lay in his bunk against the side of his cabin, he would strain his ear to hear the slightest sound, and be listening thus some-25 times for minutes before the squeak of a mouse or the step of a passing fox came as a relief to the aching sense. In the daytime, however, and especially on a morning, the prairie was another thing. The pigeons, the larks, the cranes, the multitudinous voices of the 30 ground-birds and snipes and insects, made the air pulsate with sound—a chorus that died away into an infinite murmur of music.

"Hello, Seagraves!" yelled Bob from the door.  
"The biscuit are 'most done."

Seagraves did not speak, only nodded his head, and slowly rose. The faint clouds in the west were getting a superb flame-colour above and a misty purple below, 5 and the sun had shot them with lances of yellow light. As the air grew denser with moisture, the sounds of neighbouring life began to reach the ear. Children screamed and laughed, and afar off a woman was singing a lullaby. The rattle of wagons and voices of men 10 speaking to their teams multiplied. Ducks in a neighbouring lowland were quacking. The whole scene took hold upon Seagraves with irresistible power.

#### VI. A CORN-FIELD.

A corn-field in July is a hot place. The soil is hot and dry; the wind comes across the lazily murmuring 15 leaves laden with a warm sickening smell drawn from the rapidly-growing, broad-flung banners of the corn. The sun, nearly vertical, drops a flood of dazzling light and heat upon the field over which the cool shadows run, only to make the heat seem the more 20 intense.

Julia Peterson, faint with fatigue, was toiling back and forth between the corn-rows, holding the handles of the double-shovel corn-plough, while her little brother Otto rode the steaming horse. Her heart 25 was full of bitterness, and her face flushed with heat, and her muscles aching with fatigue. The heat grew terrible. The corn came to her shoulders, and not a breath seemed to reach her, while the sun, nearing the

noon mark, lay pitilessly upon her shoulders, protected only by a calico dress. The dust rose under her feet, and as she was wet with perspiration it soiled her till, with a woman's instinctive cleanliness, she shuddered. Her 5 head throbbed dangerously. What matter to her that the kingbird pitched jovially from the maples to catch a wandering blue-bottle fly, that the robin was feeding its young, that the bobolink was singing? All these things, if she saw them, only threw her bondage to 10 labour into greater relief.

Across the field, in another patch of corn, she could see her father—a big, gruff-voiced, wide-bearded Norwegian—at work also with a plough. The corn must be ploughed, and so she toiled on, the tears dropping 15 from the shadow of the ugly sun-bonnet she wore. Her shoes, coarse and square-toed, chafed her feet; her hands, large and strong, were browned, or more properly *burnt*, on the backs by the sun. The horse's harness "*creek-cracked*," as he swung steadily and 20 patiently forward, the moisture pouring from his sides, his nostrils distended.

The field ran down to a road, and on the other side of the road ran a river—a broad, clear, shallow expanse at that point, and the eyes of the boy gazed 25 longingly at the pond and the cool shadow each time that he turned at the fence.

"Say, Jule, I'm goin' in! Come, can't I? Come—say!" he pleaded, as they stopped at the fence to let the horse breathe.

30 "I've let you go wade twice."

"But that don't do any good. My legs is all smarty, 'cause ol' Jack sweats so." The boy turned around

on the horse's back and slid back to his rump. "I can't stand it!" he burst out, sliding off and darting under the fence. "Father can't see."

The girl put her elbows on the fence, and watched her little brother as he sped away to the pool, throwing off his clothes as he ran, whooping with uncontrollable delight. Soon she could hear him splashing about in the water a short distance up the stream, and caught glimpses of his little shiny body and happy face. How cool that water looked! And the shadows there by the big basswood! How that water would cool her blistered feet! An impulse seized her, and she squeezed between the rails of the fence, and stood in the road looking up and down to see that the way was clear. It was not a main-travelled road; no one was likely to come; why not?

She hurriedly took off her shoes and stockings—how delicious the cool, soft velvet of the grass!—and sitting down on the bank under the great basswood, whose roots formed an abrupt bank, she slid her poor blistered, chafed feet into the water, her bare head leaned against the huge tree-trunk.

And now as she rested, the beauty of the scene came to her. Over her the wind moved the leaves. A jay screamed far off, as if answering the cries of the boy. A kingfisher crossed and re-crossed the stream with a dipping sweep of his wings. The river sang with its lips to the pebbles. The vast clouds went by majestically, far above the tree-tops, and the snap and buzzing and ringing whir of July insects made a ceaseless, slumberous undertone of song solvent of all else. The tired girl forgot her work. She began to dream.

## VII. PLOUGHING.

It was the last of autumn and first day of winter coming together. All day long the ploughmen on their prairie farms had moved to and fro on the wide level field through the falling snow, which melted as it fell, wetting them to the skin—all day, notwithstanding the frequent squalls of snow, the dripping, desolate clouds, and the muck of the furrows, black and tenacious as tar.

Under their dripping harness the horses swung to and fro silently, with that marvellous uncomplaining patience which marks the horse. All day the wild geese, honking wildly, as they sprawled sidewise down the wind, seemed to be fleeing from an enemy behind, and with neck outthrust and wings extended, sailed down the wind, soon lost to sight.

Yet the ploughman behind his plough, though the snow lay on his ragged great-coat, and the cold clinging mud rose on his heavy boots, fettering him like gyves, whistled in the very beard of the gale. As day passed, the snow, ceasing to melt, lay along the ploughed land and lodged in the depth of the stubble, till on each slow round the last furrow stood out black and shining as jet between the ploughed land and the gray stubble.

When night began to fall, and the geese, flying low, began to alight invisibly in the near corn-field, Stephen Council was still at work “finishing a land.” He rode on his sulky-plough when going with the wind, but walked when facing it. Sitting bent and cold but cheery under his slouch hat, he talked encouragingly to his four-in-hand.

## XIV.

### The South-Sea House.

CHARLES LAMB.

From *The Essays of Elia*. This series of portraits is chosen as typical of that deliberate description, delighting in details without forgetting the look of the whole, which is most familiar in this country in the works of Irving and Hawthorne. Compare especially Irving's Rip Van Winkle in *The Sketch Book*, and Hawthorne's customs-house officers in the introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*.

Here also should be introduced character sketches from the famous novelists and historians, especially from Dickens and Carlyle.<sup>1</sup>

READER, in thy passage from the Bank—where thou hast been receiving thy half-yearly dividends (supposing thou art a lean annuitant like myself)—to the Flower Pot, to secure a place for Dalston, or Shacklewell, or some other suburban retreat northerly,—didst thou never observe a melancholy-looking, handsome, brick and stone edifice, to the left—where Threadneedle Street abuts upon Bishopsgate? I dare say thou hast often admired its magnificent portals ever gaping wide, and disclosing to view a grave court, with cloisters, and pillars, with few or no traces of

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the famous description of Coleridge in the eighth chapter of *The Life of John Sterling*.

goers-in or comers-out—a desolation something like Balclutha's.<sup>2</sup>

This was once a house of trade,—a centre of busy interests. The throng of merchants was here—the quick pulse of gain—and here some forms of business are still kept up, though the soul be long since fled. Here are still to be seen stately porticos ; imposing staircases, offices roomy as the state apartments in palaces—deserted, or thinly peopled with a few straggling clerks ; the still more sacred interiors of court and committee-rooms, with venerable faces of beadles, door-keepers—directors seated in form on solemn days (to proclaim a dead dividend), at long worm-eaten tables that have been mahogany, with tarnished gilt leather coverings, supporting massy silver inkstands long since dry ; the oaken wainscots hung with pictures of deceased governors and sub-governors, of Queen Anne, and the two first monarchs of the Brunswick dynasty ; huge charts, which subsequent discoveries have antiquated ; dusty maps of Mexico, dim as dreams,—and soundings of the Bay of Panama ! The long passages hung with buckets, appended, in idle row, to walls, whose substance might defy any, short of the last, conflagration ; with vast ranges of cellarage under all, where dollars and pieces-of-eight once lay, an “unsunned heap,” for Mammon to have solaced his solitary heart withal—long since dissipated, or scattered into air at the blast of the breaking of that famous BUBBLE.

30 Such is the SOUTH-SEA HOUSE. At least, such it

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<sup>2</sup> “I passed by the walls of Balclutha, and they were desolate.”

—OSSIAN.

was forty years ago, when I knew it,—a magnificent relic ! What alterations may have been made in it since, I have had no opportunities of verifying. Time, I take for granted, has not freshened it. No wind has resuscitated the face of the sleeping waters. A thicker 5 crust by this time stagnates upon it. The moths, that were then battenning upon its obsolete ledgers and day-books, have rested from their depredations, but other light generations have succeeded, making fine fret-work among their single and double entries. Layers 10 of dust have accumulated (a superfœtation of dirt !) upon the old layers that seldom used to be disturbed, save by some curious finger, now and then, inquisitive to explore the mode of book-keeping in Queen Anne's reign ; or, with less hallowed curiosity, seeking to 15 unveil some of the mysteries of that tremendous HOAX, whose extent the petty peculators of our day look back upon with the same expression of incredulous admiration, and hopeless ambition of rivalry, as would become the puny face of modern conspiracy contem- 20 plating the Titan size of Vaux's superhuman plot.

Peace to the manes of the BUBBLE ! Silence and destitution are upon thy walls, proud house, for a memorial !

Situated as thou art, in the very heart of stirring 25 and living commerce,—amid the fret and fever of speculation,—with the Bank, and the 'Change, and the India-house about thee, in the hey-day of present prosperity, with their important faces, as it were, insulting thee, their *poor neighbour out of business*—to 30 the idle and merely contemplative, to such as me, old house ! there is a charm in thy quiet : a cessation—

a coolness from business—an indolence almost cloisteral—which is delightful ! With what reverence have I paced thy great bare rooms and courts at eventide ! They spoke of the past :—the shade of some dead  
5 accountant, with visionary pen in ear, would flit by me, stiff as in life. Living accounts and accountants puzzle me. I have no skill in figuring. But thy great dead tomes, which scarce three degenerate clerks of the present day could lift from their enshrining shelves—  
10 with their old fantastic flourishes, and decorative rubric interlacings—their sums in triple columnniations, set down with formal superfluity of ciphers—with pious sentences at the beginning, without which our religious ancestors never ventured to open a book of  
15 business, or bill of lading—the costly vellum covers of some of them almost persuading us that we are got into some *better library*,—are very agreeable and edifying spectacles. I can look upon these defunct dragons with complacency. Thy heavy odd-shaped  
20 ivory-handled pen-knives (our ancestors had everything on a larger scale than we have hearts for) are as good as anything from Herculaneum. The pounce-boxes of our days have gone retrograde.

The very clerks which I remember in the South-Sea  
25 House—I speak of forty years back—had an air very different from those in the public offices that I have had to do with since. They partook of the genius of the place !

They were mostly (for the establishment did not  
30 admit of superfluous salaries) bachelors. Generally (for they had not much to do) persons of a curious and speculative turn of mind. Old-fashioned, for a

reason mentioned before. Humourists, for they were of all descriptions ; and, not having been brought together in early life (which has a tendency to assimilate the members of corporate bodies to each other), but, for the most part, placed in this house in ripe or 5 middle age, they necessarily carried into it their separate habits and oddities, unqualified, if I may so speak, as into a common stock. Hence they formed a sort of Noah's ark. Odd fishes. A lay monastery. Domestic retainers in a great house, kept more for 10 show than use. Yet pleasant fellows, full of chat—and not a few among them had arrived at considerable proficiency on the German flute.

The cashier at that time was one Evans, a Cambro-Briton. He had something of the choleric complexion 15 of his countrymen stamped on his visage, but was a worthy sensible man at bottom. He wore his hair, to the last, powdered and frizzed out, in the fashion which I remember to have seen in caricatures of what were termed, in my young days, *Maccaronies*. He was 20 the last of that race of beaux. Melancholy as a gib-cat over his counter all the forenoon, I think I see him, making up his cash (as they call it) with tremulous fingers, as if he feared everyone about him was a defaulter ; in his hypochondry ready to imagine him- 25 self one ; haunted, at least, with the idea of the possibility of his becoming one ; his tristful visage clearing up a little over his roast neck of veal at Anderton's at two (where his picture still hangs, taken a little before his death by desire of the master of the coffee-house, 30 which he had frequented for the last five-and-twenty years), but not attaining the meridian of its animation

till evening brought on the hour of tea and visiting. The simultaneous sound of his well-known rap at the door with the stroke of the clock announcing six, was a topic of never-failing mirth in the families which  
5 this dear old bachelor gladdened with his presence. Then was his *forte*, his glorified hour ! How would he chirp, and expand, over a muffin ! How would he dilate into secret history. His countryman, Pennant himself, in particular, could not be more eloquent than  
10 he in relation to old and new London ; the site of old theatres, churches, streets gone to decay ; where Rosamond's Pond stood ; the Mulberry gardens ; and the Conduit in Cheap—with many a pleasant anecdote, derived from paternal tradition, of those grotesque  
15 figures which Hogarth has immortalized in his picture of *Noon*—the worthy descendants of those heroic confessors, who, flying to this country, from the wrath of Louis the Fourteenth and his dragoons, kept alive the flame of pure religion in the sheltering obscurities of  
20 Hog-lane, and the vicinity of the Seven Dials !

Deputy, under Evans, was Thomas Tame. He had the air and stoop of a nobleman. You would have taken him for one, had you met him in one of the passages leading to Westminster-hall. By stoop, I  
25 mean that gentle bending of the body forwards, which, in great men, must be supposed to be the effect of an habitual condescending attention to the applications of their inferiors. While he held you in converse, you felt strained to the height in the colloquy. The conference over, you were at leisure to smile at the comparative insignificance of the pretensions which had just awed you. His intellect was of the shallowest

order. It did not reach to a saw or a proverb. His mind was in its original state of white paper. A sucking-babe might have posed him. What was it then? Was he rich? Alas, no! Thomas Tame was very poor. Both he and his wife looked outwardly gentle-folks, when I fear all was not well at all times within. She had a neat meagre person, which it was evident she had not sinned in over-pampering; but in its veins was noble blood. She traced her descent, by some labyrinth of relationship, which I never thoroughly understood—much less can explain with any heraldic certainty at this time of day—to the illustrious, but unfortunate, house of Derwentwater. This was the secret of Thomas's stoop. This was the thought, the sentiment, the bright solitary star of your lives,—<sup>15</sup> ye mild and happy pair,—which cheered you in the night of intellect, and in the obscurity of your station! This was to you instead of riches, instead of rank, instead of glittering attainments; and it was worth them all together. You insulted none with it; but,<sup>20</sup> while you wore it as a piece of defensive armour only, no insult likewise could reach you through it. *Decus et solamen.*

Of quite another stamp was the then accountant, John Tipp. He neither pretended to high blood, nor,<sup>25</sup> in good truth, cared one fig about the matter. He "thought an accountant the greatest character in the world, and himself the greatest accountant in it." Yet John was not without his hobby. The fiddle relieved his vacant hours. He sang, certainly, with<sup>30</sup> other notes than to the Orphean lyre. He did, indeed, scream and scrape most abominably. His fine suite

of official rooms in Threadneedle Street, which, without anything very substantial appended to them, were enough to enlarge a man's notions of himself that lived in them (I know not who is the occupier of them now), resounded fortnightly to the notes of a concert of "sweet breasts," as our ancestors would have called them, culled from clubrooms and orchestras,—chorus-singers, first and second violoncellos, double basses, and clarionets,—who ate his cold mutton and drank 10 his punch, and praised his ear. He sate like Lord Midas among them. But at the desk Tipp was quite another sort of creature. Thence all ideas, that were purely ornamental, were banished. You could not speak of anything romantic without rebuke. Politics 15 were excluded. A newspaper was thought too refined and abstracted. The whole duty of man consisted in writing off dividend warrants. The striking of the annual balance in the company's books (which, perhaps, differed from the balance of last year in the sum 20 of £25 1s. 6d.) occupied his days and nights for a month previous. Not that Tipp was blind to the deadness of *things* (as they call them in the City) in his beloved house, or did not sigh for a return of the old stirring days when South-Sea hopes were young— 25 (he was indeed equal to the wielding of any the most intricate accounts of the most flourishing company in these or those days):—but to a genuine accountant the difference of proceeds is as nothing. The fractional farthing is as dear to his heart as the thousands 30 which stand before it. He is the true actor, who, whether his part be a prince or a peasant, must act it with like intensity. With Tipp form was everything.

*CHARLES LAMB.*

life was formal. His actions seemed ruled with a  
r. His pen was not less erring than his heart.  
made the best executor in the world ; he was  
gued with incessant executorships accordingly,  
ch excited his spleen and soothed his vanity in 5  
al ratios. He would swear (for Tipp swore) at the  
e orphans, whose rights he would guard with a  
acity like the grasp of the dying hand, that com-  
mended their interests to his protection. With all this  
re was about him a sort of timidity—(his few 10  
mies used to give it a worse name)—a something  
ch, in reference to the dead, we will place, if you  
use, a little on this side of the heroic: Nature cer-  
ly had been pleased to endow John Tipp with a  
cient measure of the principle of self-preservation. 15  
re is a cowardice which we do not despise, because  
is nothing base or treacherous in its elements ; it  
ays itself, not you : it is mere temperament ; the  
nce of the romantic and the enterprising ; it sees  
on in the way, and will not, with Fortinbras, 20  
atly find quarrel in a straw," when some supposed  
ur is at stake. Tipp never mounted the box of a  
-coach in his life ; or leaned against the rails of a  
ny ; or walked upon the ridge of a parapet ; or  
d down a precipice ; or let off a gun ; or went 25  
a water-party ; or would willingly let you go, if  
uld have helped it : neither was it recorded of  
hat for lucre, or for intimidation, he ever for-  
riend or principle.

om next shall we summon from the dusty dead, 30  
om common qualities become uncommon ? Can  
st thee Henry Man, the wit, the polished man of

letters, the *author*, of the South-Sea House? who never enteredst thy office in a morning, or quittedst it in mid-day—(what didst *thou* in an office?)—without some quirk that left a sting! Thy gibes and thy jokes  
5 are now extinct, or survive but in two forgotten volumes, which I had the good fortune to rescue from a stall in Barbican, not three days ago, and found thee terse, fresh, epigrammatic, as alive. Thy wit is a little gone by in these fastidious days—thy topics are staled  
10 by the “new-born gauds” of the time; but great thou used to be in Public Ledgers, and in Chronicles, upon Chatham, and Shelburn, and Rockingham, and Howe, and Burgoyne, and Clinton, and the war which ended  
15 in the tearing from Great Britain her rebellious colonies,—and Keppel, and Wilkes, and Sawbridge, and Bull, and Dunning, and Pratt, and Richmond,—and such small politics.

A little less facetious, and a great deal more obstreperous, was fine, rattling, rattle-headed Plumer. He  
20 was descended,—not in a right line, reader, (for his lineal pretensions, like his personal, favoured a little of the sinister bend), from the Plumers of Hertfordshire. So tradition gave him out; and certain family features not a little sanctioned the opinion. Certainly old  
25 Walter Plumer (his reputed author) had been a rake in his days, and visited much in Italy, and had seen the world. He was uncle, bachelor-uncle, to the fine old Whig still living, who has represented the county in so many successive parliaments, and has a fine old  
30 mansion near Ware. Walter flourished in George the Second’s days, and was the same who was summoned before the House of Commons about a business of

franks, with the old Duchess of Marlborough. You may read of it in Johnson's Life of Cave. Cave came off cleverly in that business. It is certain our Plumer did nothing to discountenance the rumour. He rather seemed pleased whenever it was, with all gentleness, 5 insinuated. But, besides his family pretensions, Plumer was an engaging fellow, and sang gloriously.

Not so sweetly sang Plumer as thou sangest, mild, childlike, pastoral M——; a flute's breathing less divinely whispering than thy Arcadian melodies, when, 10 in tones worthy of Arden, thou didst chant that song sung by Amiens to the banished Duke, which proclaims the winter wind more lenient than for a man to be ungrateful. Thy sire was old surly M——, the unapproachable churchwarden of Bishopsgate. He knew 15 not what he did, when he begat thee, like spring, gentle offspring of blustering winter—only unfortunate in thy ending, which should have been mild, conciliatory, swan-like.

Much remains to sing. Many fantastic shapes rise 20 up, but they must be mine in private,—already I have fooled the reader to the top of his bent,—else could I omit that strange creature Woollett, who existed in trying the question, and *bought litigations*?—and still stranger, inimitable, solemn Hepworth, from whose 25 gravity Newton might have deduced the law of gravitation. How profoundly would he nib a pen—with what deliberation would he wet a wafer!

But it is time to close—night's wheels are rattling fast over me—it is proper to have done with this 30 solemn mockery.

Reader, what if I have been playing with thee all

this while?—peradventure the very *names*, which I have summoned up before thee, are fantastic—unsubstantial—like Henry Pimpernel, and old John Naps of Greece.

- 5 Be satisfied that something answering to them has had a being. Their importance is from the past.

## XV.

### Ser Francesco Goes to Church.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

From *The Pentameron* (iii). This passage, through proceeding by narrative and dialogue, is purely descriptive in intent. It is chosen for the delight in the picturesque which appears in the peculiarly artistic handling of details.

IT being now the Lord's Day, Messer Francesco thought it meet that he should rise early in the morning and bestir himself, to hear mass in the parish church at Certaldo. Whereupon he went on tiptoe, if so weighty a man could indeed go in such a fashion, 5 and lifted softly the latch of Ser Giovanni's chamber-door, that he might salute him ere he departed, and occasion no wonder at the step he was about to take. He found Ser Giovanni fast asleep, with the missal wide open across his nose, and a pleasant smile on his 10 genial joyous mouth. Ser Francesco leaned over the couch, closed his hands together, and, looking with even more than his usual benignity, said in a low voice :

“God bless thee, gentle soul ! the Mother of Purity 15 and Innocence protect thee !”

He then went into the kitchen, where he found the girl Assunta, and mentioned his resolution. She in-

formed him that the horse had eaten his two beans,<sup>1</sup> and was as strong as a lion and as ready as a lover. Ser Francesco patted her on the cheek, and called her *semplicetta*! She was overjoyed at this honour from so great a man, the bosom friend of her good master, whom she had always thought the greatest man in the world, not excepting Monsignore, until he told her he was only a dog confronted with Ser Francesco. She tripped alertly across the paved court into the stable, and took down the saddle and bridle from the farther end of the rack. But Ser Francesco, with his natural politeness, would not allow her to equip his palfrey.

"This is not the work for maidens," said he; "return to the house, good girl!"

She lingered a moment, then went away; but, mistrusting the dexterity of Ser Francesco, she stopped and turned back again, and peeped through the half-closed door, and heard sundry sobs and wheezes round about the girth. Ser Francesco's wind ill seconded his intention; and, although he had thrown the saddle valiantly and stoutly in its station, yet the girths brought him into extremity. She entered again, and dissembling the reason, asked him whether he would not take a small beaker of the sweet white wine before he set out, and offered to girdle the horse while his reverence bitted and bridled him. Before any answer could be returned, she had begun. And having now satisfactorily executed her undertaking, she felt irrepressible delight and glee at being able to do what Ser Francesco had failed in. He was scarcely

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, *due fave*, the expression on such occasions to signify a small quantity.

more successful with his allotment of the labour ; found unlooked-for intricacies and complications in the machinery, wondered that human wit could not simplify it, and declared that the animal had never exhibited such restiveness before. In fact, he never 5 had experienced the same grooming. At this conjuncture, a green cap made its appearance, bound with straw-coloured ribbon, and surmounted with two bushy sprigs of hawthorn, of which the globular buds were swelling, and some bursting, but fewer yet open. It was young Simplizio Nardi, who sometimes came on the Sunday morning to sweep the court-yard for Assunta.

"Oh ! this time you are come just when you were wanted," said the girl. " Bridle, directly, Ser 15 Francesco's horse, and then go away about your business."

The youth blushed, and kissed Ser Francesco's hand, begging his permission. It was soon done. He then held the stirrup ; and Ser Francesco, with 20 scarcely three efforts, was seated and erect on the saddle. The horse, however, had somewhat more inclination for the stable than for the expedition ; and, as Assunta was handing to the rider his long ebony staff, bearing an ivory caduceus, the quadruped 25 turned suddenly round. Simplizio called him *bestiacia!* and then softening it, *poco garbato!* and proposed to Ser Francesco that he should leave the bastone behind, and take the crab-switch he presented to him, giving at the same time a sample of its efficacy, which 30 covered the long grizzle hair of the worthy quadruped with a profusion of pink blossoms, like embroidery.

The offer was declined ; but Assunta told Simplizio to carry it himself, and to walk by the side of Ser Canonico quite up to the church-porch, having seen what a sad, dangerous beast his reverence had under 5 him.

With perfect good will, partly in the pride of obedience to Assunta, and partly to enjoy the renown of accompanying a canon of holy church, Simplizio did as she enjoined.

10 And now the sound of village bells, in many hamlets and convents and churches out of sight, was indistinctly heard, and lost again ; and at last the five of Certaldo seemed to crow over the faintness of them all. The freshness of the morning was enough 15 of itself to excite the spirits of youth ; a portion of which never fails to descend on years that are far removed from it, if the mind has partaken in innocent mirth while it was its season and its duty to enjoy it. Parties of young and old passed the canonico and his 20 attendant with mute respect, bowing and bare-headed; for that ebony staff threw its spell over the tongue, which the frank and hearty salutation of the bearer was inadequate to break. Simplizio, once or twice, attempted to call back an intimate of the same age 25 with himself ; but the utmost he could obtain was a *riveritissimo!* and a genuflexion to the rider. It is reported that a heart-burning rose up from it in the breast of a cousin, some days after, too distinctly apparent in the long-drawn appellation of *Gnor*<sup>3</sup> 30 Simplizio.

Ser Francesco moved gradually forward, his steed

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<sup>3</sup> Contraction of *signor*, customary in Tuscany.

picking his way along the lane, and looking fixedly on the stones with all the sobriety of a mineralogist. He himself was well satisfied with the pace, and told Simplizio to be sparing of the switch, unless in case of a hornet or a gadfly. Simplizio smiled, toward the 5 hedge, and wondered at the condescension of so great a theologian and astrologer, in joking with him about the gadflies and hornets in the beginning of April. "Ah! there are men in the world who can make wit out of anything!" said he to himself. 10

As they approached the walls of the town, the whole country was pervaded by a stirring and diversified air of gladness. Laughter and songs and flutes and viols, inviting voices and complying responses, mingled with merry bells and with processional hymns, along the woodland paths and along the yellow meadows. It was really the *Lord's Day*, for he made his creatures happy in it, and their hearts were thankful. Even the cruel had ceased from cruelty; and the rich man alone exacted from the animal his 20 daily labour. Ser Francesco made this remark, and told his youthful guide that he had never been before where he could not walk to church on a Sunday; and that nothing should persuade him to urge the speed of his beast, on the seventh day, beyond his natural 25 and willing foot's-pace. He reached the gates of Certaldo more than half an hour before the time of service, and he found laurels suspended over them, and being suspended; and many pleasant and beautiful faces were protruded between the ranks of gentry 30 and clergy who awaited him. Little did he expect such an attendance; but Fra Biagio of San Vivaldo,

who himself had offered no obsequiousness or respect, had scattered the secret of his visit throughout the whole country. A young poet, the most celebrated in the town, approached the canonico with a long scroll  
5 of verses, which fell below the knee, beginning,

How shall we welcome our illustrious guest ?

To which Ser Francesco immediately replied, “Take your favourite maidén, lead the dance with her, and bid all your friends follow ; you have a good  
10 half-hour for it.”

Universal applauses succeeded, the music struck up, couples were instantly formed. The gentry on this occasion led out the cittadinanza, as they usually do in the villeggiatura, rarely in the carnival, and never  
15 at other times. The elder of the priests stood round in their sacred vestments, and looked with cordiality and approbation on the youths, whose hands and arms could indeed do much, and did it, but whose active eyes could rarely move upward the modester of their  
20 partners.

While the elder of the clergy were thus gathering the fruits of their liberal cares and paternal exhortations, some of the younger looked on with a tenderer sentiment, not unmixed with regret. Suddenly the  
25 bells ceased ; the figure of the dance was broken ; all hastened into the church ; and many hands that joined on the green met together at the font, and touched the brow reciprocally with its lustral waters, in soul-devotion.

30 After the service, and after a sermon a good church-

hour in length to gratify him, enriched with compliments from all authors, Christian and Pagan, informing him at the conclusion that, although he had been crowned in the Capitol, he must die, being born mortal, Ser Francesco rode homeward. The sermon 5 seemed to have sunk deeply into him, and even into the horse under him, for both of them nodded, both snorted, and one stumbled. Simplizio was twice fain to cry :

“ Ser Canonico ! Riverenza ! in this country if we 10 sleep before dinner it does us harm. There are stones in the road, Ser Canonico, loose as eggs in a nest, and pretty nigh as thick together, huge as mountains.”

“ Good lad ! ” said Ser Francesco, rubbing his eyes, “ toss the biggest of them out of the way, and never 15 mind the rest.”

The horse, although he walked, shuffled almost into an amble as he approached the stable, and his master looked up at it with nearly the same contentment. Assunta had been ordered to wait for his return, and 20 cried :

“ Oh, Ser Francesco ! you are looking at our long apricot, that runs the whole length of the stable and barn, covered with blossoms as the old white hen is with feathers. You must come in the summer, and 25 eat this fine fruit with Signor Padrone. You cannot think how ruddy and golden and sweet and mellow it is. There are peaches in all the fields, and plums, and pears, and apples, but there is not another apricot for miles and miles. Ser Giovanni brought the stone 30 from Naples before I was born : a lady gave it to him when she had eaten only half the fruit off it : but per-

haps you may have seen her, for you have ridden as far as Rome, or beyond. Padrone looks often at the fruit, and eats it willingly ; and I have seen him turn over the stones in his plate, and choose one from the  
5 rest, and put it into his pocket, but never plant it."

## XVI.

**I. A Night Among the Pines.<sup>1</sup>**

**II. Memoirs of An Islet.<sup>2</sup>**

**ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.**

The classic quality in Stevenson's writing is most striking in his descriptions. As fair specimens of his best work these extracts will repay somewhat minute study.

### I.

FROM *Bleymard* after dinner, although it was already late, I set out to scale a portion of the *Lozère*. An ill-marked stony drove-road guided me forward ; and I met nearly half a dozen bullock-carts descending from the woods, each laden with a whole pine-tree for the winter's firing. At the top of the woods, which do not climb very high upon this cold ridge, I struck leftward by a path among the pines, until I hit on a dell of green turf, where a streamlet made a little spout over some stones to serve me for a water-tap, 10 "In a more sacred or sequestered bower—nor nymph nor faunus haunted." The trees were not old, but they grew thickly round the glade : there was no out-

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<sup>1</sup> Printed, by kind permission of Messrs. Roberts Brothers, from *Travels with a Donkey*.

<sup>2</sup> Printed, by kind permission of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, from *Memories and Portraits*.

look, except northeastward upon distant hill-tops, or straight upward to the sky ; and the encampment felt secure and private like a room. By the time I had made my arrangements and fed *Modestine*, the day was 5 already beginning to decline. I buckled myself to the knees into my sack and made a hearty meal ; and as soon as the sun went down, I pulled my cap over my eyes and fell asleep.

Night is a dead monotonous period under a roof ; 10 but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature. What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man 15 who sleeps afield. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely ; even as she takes her rest she turns and smiles ; and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping 20 hemisphere, and all the outdoor world are on their feet. It is then that the cock first crows, not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadows ; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, 25 and change to a new lair among the ferns ; and houseless men, who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

At what inaudible summons, at what gentle touch of Nature, are all these sleepers thus recalled in the same 30 hour to life ? Do the stars rain down an influence, or do we share some thrill of mother earth below our resting bodies ? Even shepherds and old country-

folk, who are the deepest read in these arcana, have not a guess as to the means or purpose of this mighty resurrection. Toward two in the morning they declare the thing takes place ; and neither know nor inquire further. And at least it is a pleasant incident. 5 We are disturbed in our slumber only, like the luxurious *Montaigne*, "that we may the better and more sensibly relish it." We have a moment to look upon the stars, and there is a special pleasure for some minds in the reflection that we share the impulse 10 with all outdoor creatures in our neighbourhood, that we have escaped out of the *Bastille* of civilization, and are become, for the time being, a mere kindly animal and a sheep of Nature's flock.

When that hour came to me among the pines, I 15 wakened thirsty. My tin was standing by me half full of water. I emptied it at a draught ; and feeling broad awake after this internal cold aspersion, sat upright to make a cigarette. The stars were clear, coloured, and jewel-like, but not frosty. A faint silvery 20 vapour stood for the Milky Way. All around me the black fir-points stood upright and stock-still. By the whiteness of the pack-saddle, I could see *Modestine* walking round and round at the length of her tether ; I could hear her steadily munching at the sward ; but 25 there was not another sound, save the indescribable quiet talk of the runnel over the stones. I lay lazily smoking and studying the colour of the sky, as we call the void of space, from where it showed a reddish gray behind the pines to where it showed a glossy 30 blue-black between the stars. As if to be more like a peddler, I wear a silver ring. This I could see

faintly shining as I raised or lowered the cigarette ; and at each whiff the inside of my hand was illuminated, and became for a second the highest light in the landscape.

- 5 A faint wind, more like a moving coolness than a stream of air, passed down the glade from time to time ; so that even in my great chamber the air was being renewed all night long. I thought with horror of the inn at *Chasseraud*s and the congregated night-  
10 caps ; with horror of the nocturnal prowesses of clerks and students, of hot theatres and pass-keys and close rooms. I have not often enjoyed a more serene possession of myself, nor felt more independent of material aids. The outer world, from which we  
15 cower into our houses, seemed after all a gentle habitable place ; and night after night a man's bed, it seemed, was laid and waiting for him in the fields, where God keeps an open house. I thought I had rediscovered one of those truths which are revealed to  
20 savages and hid from political economists : at the least, I had discovered a new pleasure for myself. And yet even while I was exulting in my solitude I became aware of a strange lack. I wished a companion to lie near me in the starlight, silent and not moving,  
25 but ever within touch. For there is a fellowship more quiet even than solitude, and which, rightly understood, is solitude made perfect. And to live out of doors with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free.  
30 As I thus lay, between content and longing, a faint noise stole towards me through the pines. I thought, at first, it was the crowing of cocks or the barking of

dogs at some very distant farm ; but steadily and gradually it took articulate shape in my ears, until I became aware that a passenger was going by upon the high-road in the valley, and singing loudly as he went. There was more of good-will than grace in his performance ; but he trolled with ample lungs ; and the sound of his voice took hold upon the hillside and set the air shaking in the leafy glens. I have heard people passing by night in sleeping cities ; some of them sang ; one, I remember, played loudly on the bag-pipes. I have heard the rattle of a cart or carriage spring up suddenly after hours of stillness, and pass, for some minutes, within the range of my hearing as I lay abed. There is a romance about all who are abroad in the black hours, and with something of a thrill we try to guess their business. But here the romance was double : first, this glad passenger, lit internally with wine, who sent up his voice in music through the night ; and then I, on the other hand, buckled into my sack, and smoking alone in the pine-woods between four and five thousand feet towards the stars.

When I awoke again (*Sunday, 29th September*), many of the stars had disappeared ; only the stronger companions of the night still burned visibly overhead ; and away towards the east I saw a faint haze of light upon the horizon, such as had been the Milky Way when I was last awake. Day was at hand. I lit my lantern, and by its glowworm light put on my boots and gaiters ; then I broke up some bread for *Modestine*, filled my can at the water-tap, and lit my spirit-lamp to boil myself some chocolate. The blue darkness

lay long in the glade where I had so sweetly slumbered ; but soon there was a broad streak of orange melting into gold along the mountain-tops of *Vivarais*. A solemn glee possessed my mind at this gradual and  
5 lovely coming in of day. I heard the runnel with delight ; I looked round me for something beautiful and unexpected ; but the still black pine-trees, the hollow glade, the munching ass, remained unchanged in figure. Nothing had altered but the light, and that,  
10 indeed, shed over all a spirit of life and of breathing peace, and moved me to a strange exhilaration.

I drank my water chocolate, which was hot if it was not rich, and strolled here and there, and up and down about the glade. While I was thus delaying, a  
15 gush of steady wind, as long as a heavy sigh, poured direct out of the quarter of the morning. It was cold, and set me sneezing. The trees near at hand tossed their black plumes in its passage ; and I could see the thin distant spires of pine along the edge of the hill  
20 rock slightly to and fro against the golden east. Ten minutes after, the sunlight spread at a gallop along the hillside, scattering shadows and sparkles, and the day had come completely.

I hastened to prepare my pack, and tackle the  
25 steep ascent that lay before me ; but I had something on my mind. It was only a fancy ; yet a fancy will sometimes be importunate. I had been most hospitably received and punctually served in my green caravanserai. The room was airy, the water excellent,  
30 and the dawn had called me to a moment. I say nothing of the tapestries or the inimitable ceiling, nor yet of the view which I command from the windows ;

but I felt I was in some one's debt for all this liberal entertainment. And so it pleased me, in a half-laughing way, to leave pieces of money on the turf as I went along, until I had left enough for my night's lodging. I trust they did not fall to some rich and 5 churlish drover.

## II.

The little isle of Earraid lies close in to the southwest corner of the Ross of Mull : the sound of Iona on one side, across which you may see the isle and church of Columba ; the open sea to the other, where you 10 shall be able to mark on a clear, surfy day, the breakers running white on many sunken rocks. I first saw it, or first remember seeing it, framed in the round bull's-eye of a cabin port, the sea lying smooth along its shores like the waters of a lake, the colourless, clear 15 light of the early morning making plain its heathery and rocky hummocks. There stood upon it, in those days, a single rude house of uncemented stones, approached by a pier of wreck-wood. It must have been very early, for it was then summer, and in 20 summer, in that latitude, day scarcely withdraws ; but even at that hour the house was making a sweet smoke of peats which came to me over the bay, and the bare-legged daughters of the cotter were wading by the pier. The same day we visited the shores of the isle 25 in the ship's boats ; rowed deep into Fiddler's Hole, sounding as we went ; and, having taken stock of all possible accommodation, pitched on the northern inlet as the scene of operations. For it was no accident

that had brought the lighthouse steamer to anchor in the Bay of Earraig. Fifteen miles away to seaward, a certain black rock stood environed by the Atlantic rollers, the outpost of the Torran reefs. Here was a  
5 tower to be built, and a star lighted, for the conduct of seamen. But as the rock was small, and hard of access, and far from land, the work would be one of years ; and my father was now looking for a shore station, where the stones might be quarried and  
10 dressed, the men live, and the tender, with some degree of safety, lie at anchor.

I saw Earraig next from the stern-thwart of an Iona lugger, Sam Bough and I sitting there cheek by jowl, with our feet upon our baggage, in a beautiful, clear,  
15 northern summer eve. And behold ! there was now a pier of stone, there were rows of sheds, railways, travelling-crane, a street of cottages, an iron house for the resident engineer, wooden bothies for the men, a stage where the courses of the tower were put together ex-  
20 perimentally, and behind the settlement a great gash in the hillside where granite was quarried. In the bay, the steamer lay at her moorings. All day long there hung about the place the music of chinking tools ; and even in the dead of night the watchman  
25 carried his lantern to and fro, in the dark settlement, and could light the pipe of any midnight muser. It was, above all, strange to see Earraig on the Sunday, when the sound of the tools ceased and there fell a crystal quiet. All about the green compound men  
30 would be sauntering in their Sunday's best, walking with those lax joints of the reposing toiler, thoughtfully smoking, talking small, as if in honour of the

stillness, or hearkening to the wailing of the gulls. And it was strange to see our Sabbath services, held, as they were, in one of the bothies, with Mr. Brebner reading at a table, and the congregation perched about in the double tier of sleeping-bunks ; and to hear the 5 singing of the psalms, 'the chapters,' the inevitable Spurgeon's sermon, and the old, eloquent lighthouse prayer.

In fine weather, when by the spy-glass on the hill the sea was observed to run low upon the reef, there 10 would be a sound of preparation in the very early morning ; and before the sun had risen from behind Ben More, the tender would steam out of the bay. Over fifteen sea-miles of the great blue Atlantic rollers she ploughed her way, trailing at her tail a 15 brace of wallowing stone-lighters. The open ocean widened upon either board, and the hills of the mainland began to go down on the horizon, before she came to her unhomely destination, and lay-to at last where the rock clapped its black head above the swell, 20 with the tall iron barrack on its spider legs, and the truncated tower, and the cranes waving their arms, and the smoke of the engine-fire rising in the mid-sea. An ugly reef is this of the Dhu Heartach ; no pleasant assemblage of shelves, and pools, and creeks, 25 about which a child might play for a whole summer without weariness, like the Bell Rock or the Skerryvore, but one oval nodule of black-trap, sparsely bedabbled with an inconspicuous fucus, and alive in every crevice with a dingy insect between a slater and a bug. No 30 other life was there but that of sea-birds, and of the sea itself, that here ran like a mill-race, and growled

about the outer reef forever, and ever and again, in the calmest weather, roared and spouted on the rock itself. Times were different upon Dhu Heartach when it blew, and the night fell dark, and the neighbour lights 5 of Skerryvore and Rhu-val were quenched in fog, and the men sat prisoned high up in their iron drum, that then resounded with the lashing of the sprays. Fear sat with them in their sea-beleaguered dwelling ; and the colour changed in anxious faces when some greater 10 billow struck the barrack, and its pillars quivered and sprang under the blow. It was then that the foreman builder, Mr. Goodwillie, whom I see before me still in his rock-habit of undecipherable rags, would get his fiddle down and strike up human minstrelsy amid 15 the music of the storm. But it was in sunshine only that I saw Dhu Heartach ; and it was in sunshine, or the yet lovelier summer afterglow, that the steamer would return to Earraid, ploughing an enchanted sea ; the obedient lighters, relieved of their deck cargo, 20 riding in her wake more quietly ; and the steersman upon each, as she rose on the long swell, standing tall and dark against the shining west.

But it was in Earraid itself that I delighted chiefly. The lighthouse settlement scarce encroached beyond 25 its fences ; over the top of the first brae the ground was all virgin, the world all shut out, the face of things unchanged by any of man's doings. Here was no living presence, save for the limpets on the rocks, for some old, gray, rain-beaten ram that I might rouse 30 out of a ferny den betwixt two boulders, or for the haunting and the piping of the gulls. It was older than man ; it was found so by incoming Celts, and

seafaring Norsemen, and Columba's priests. The earthy savour of the bog plants, the rude disorder of the boulders, the inimitable seaside brightness of the air, the brine and the iodine, the lap of the billows among the weedy reefs, the sudden springing up of a great run of dashing surf along the sea-front of the isle,—all that I saw and felt my predecessors must have seen and felt with scarce a difference. I steeped myself in open air and in past ages.

10

“Delightful would it be to me to be in Uchd Ailiun,  
 On the pinnacle of a rock,  
 That I might often see  
 The face of the ocean ;  
 That I might hear the song of the wonderful birds,  
 Source of happiness ;  
 That I might hear the thunder of the crowding waves  
 Upon the rocks :  
 At times at work without compulsion—  
 This would be delightful ;  
 At times plucking dulse from the rocks ;  
 At times at fishing.”

15

20

So, about the next island of Iona, sang Columba himself twelve hundred years before. And so might I have sung of Earraid.

And all the while I was aware that this life of sea- 25 bathing and sun-burning was for me but a holiday. In that year cannon were roaring for days together on French battle-fields ; and I would sit in my isle (I call it mine, after the use of lovers) and think upon the war, and the loudness of these far-away battles, and 30 the pain of the men's wounds, and the weariness of their marching. And I would think too of that other

war which is as old as mankind, and is indeed the life of man : the unsparing war, the grinding slavery of competition ; the toil of seventy years, dear-bought bread, precarious honour, the perils and pitfalls, and  
5 the poor rewards. It was a long look forward ; the future summoned me as with trumpet calls, it warned me back as with a voice of weeping and beseeching ; and I thrilled and trembled on the brink of life, like a childish bather on the beach.

10 There was another young man on Earraid in these days, and we were much together, bathing, clambering on the boulders, trying to sail a boat and spinning round instead in the oily whirlpools of the roost. But the most part of the time we spoke of the great un-  
15 charted desert of our futures ; wondering together what should there befall us ; hearing with surprise the sound of our own voices in the empty vestibule of youth. As far, and as hard, as it seemed then to look forward to the grave, so far it seems now to look back-  
20 ward upon these emotions ; so hard to recall justly that loath submission, as of the sacrificial bull, with which we stooped our necks under the yoke of destiny. I met my old companion but the other day ; I cannot tell of course what he was thinking ; but, upon my  
25 part, I was wondering to see us both so much at home, and so composed and sedentary in the world ; and how much we had gained, and how much we had lost, to attain to that composure ; and which had been upon the whole our best estate : when we sat there prating  
30 sensibly like men of some experience, or when we shared our timorous and hopeful counsels in a western islet.



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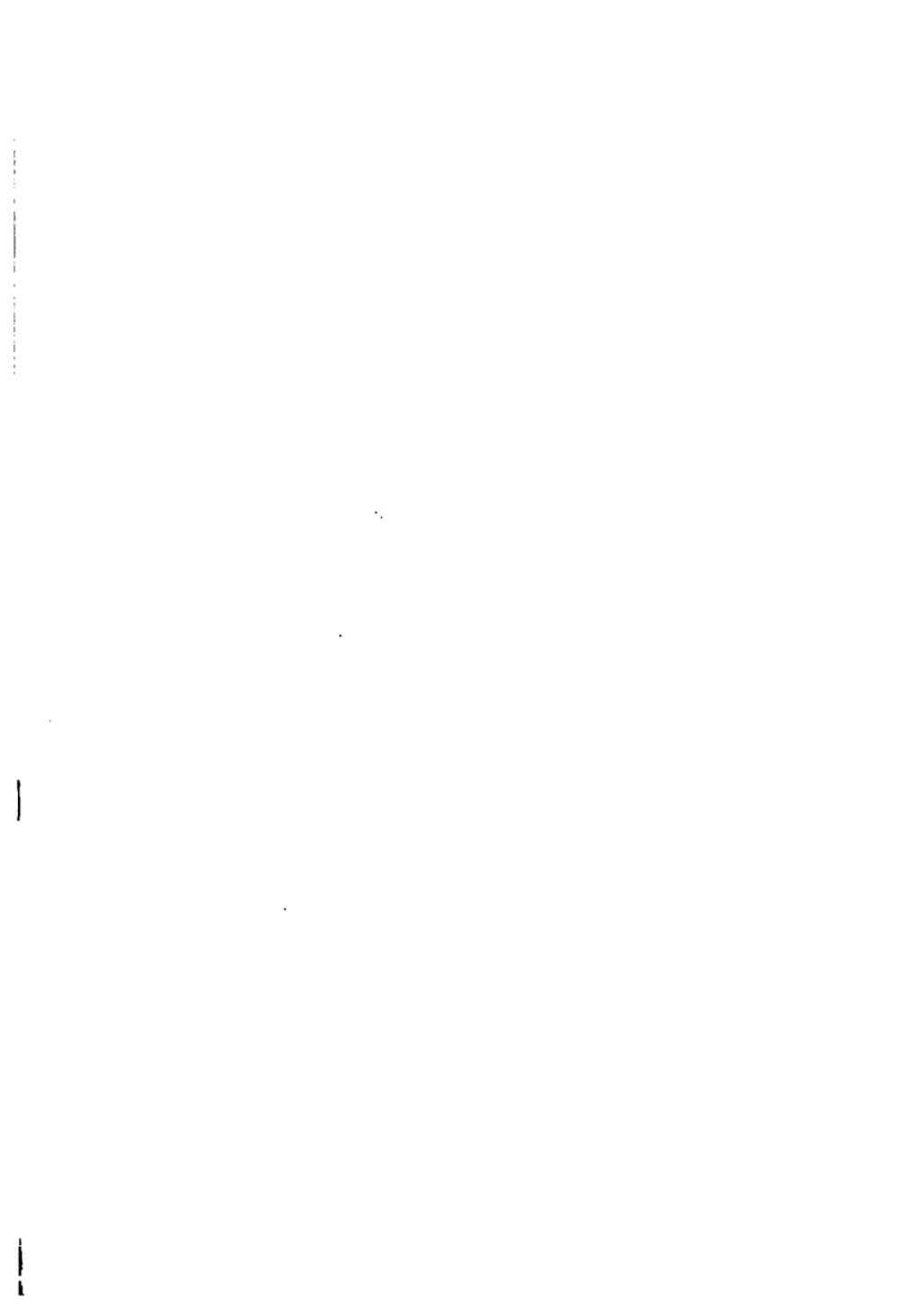
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